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№ 42 OCTOBER 1992

NEW TIMES

INTERNATIONAL

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VLADIMIR ZHIRINOVSKY:

"I am the Almighty! am Tyrant! will follow n Hitler's footsteps..."

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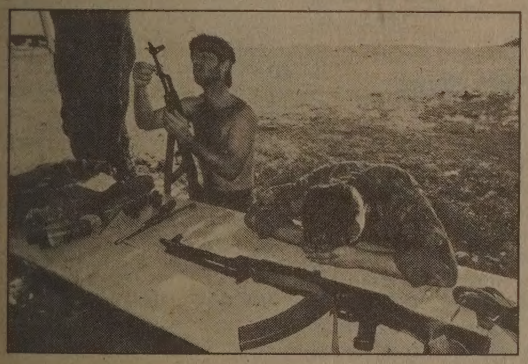

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"Give me a billion dollars and I'll become the President of Russia," assures Vladimir Zhirinovsky.

Drawing by Igor Shein

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Cover photo by Vladimir Pchelkin

My guess

The news that Greek businessman, Jannis Jannikos, acquired the controlling block of shares of *Pravda*, the former newspaper of the Russian Communists, has evoked much comment here. Where did a small businessman find the wherewithal to buy a newspaper as expensive as, say, *Le Monde* or *Le Figaro*, estimated at millions of drachmas? Jannikos is not a billionaire but the owner of a tiny publishing house in Athens. Where did he get the money? Why did it seem attractive to him to invest capital in the almost bankrupt *Pravda*? True, Jannikos is a veteran Communist who, moreover, was sentenced to death. But what is a Communist millionaire? There are more Communists among the poor. My guess is that some have made fortunes investing the aid-money received from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Their party cards gave them access to this money. Having studied the Russian market, they hope that an opposition newspaper will bring them good profits. People like to read scandalous reports about their rulers whether Communists, Democrats, Liberals or Socialists.

Eschil Chronopoulos
Piraeus

Only lunatics need guardianship

I have come across several issues of your magazine. The English is fairly good. Ideological fanaticism is minimal. By way of polemics with your Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, I would like to express my surprise at his proposal in the United Nations. At the General Assembly he spoke about the need of restoring the trusteeship system which existed in the period of colonialism. I worked in countries under UN trusteeship back in the fifties. It should be said right out that there was no difference between a trusteeship territory and a colony or protectorate. The idea of guardianship is akin to the idea of world domination. I am deeply convinced therefore that it is unacceptable to civilized humanity. This idea must be buried in oblivion for ever.

Jim Garrison
Minnesota

I met with Sorge

I came to Japan in 1940 from the United States as a correspondent for the International News Service. The foreign journalists who worked in Tokyo at the time considered Richard Sorge a Nazi fanatic and German Nationalist, but by no means a Soviet spy. We knew that he was on friendly terms with German Ambassador, Gen. Ott, a decent and old-fashioned Prussian officer who did not join the Nazi party and therefore felt alone among his subordinates. Richard Sorge was the man with whom Ott could let loose a little. In the morning, they could often be seen riding on horses in the park not far from the German Embassy. It was evidently the best opportunity for Sorge to learn of secret reports from Berlin.

I saw Sorge the last time at a press conference. They were held then in the old imperial theatre. I usually sat beside him. But one day in October the seat beside me was vacant. Nor did my good friend Branko de Vukelitch, Sorge's close aid, appear at a press conference. None of us were interested in the fate of Sorge. But right after the press conference we phoned Vukelitch's wife to find out what had happened to him. She replied: "He was taken away." We never saw them again.

Branko de Vukelitch fell ill in prison and died. Sorge proved stronger. He met his death courageously.

Tom Crichton,
American journalist

Party bourgeoisie

We have been taught from the cradle that private property is a bad thing. Grim reality has knocked the bottom out of the "omnipotent" theory. Having renounced their own principles, Communists have appropriated the hated private property. I hope nevertheless that, when a majority trade union members realize the significance of the present events, a new Lenin will not appear on the mausoleum and proclaim the famous slogan: "Expropriate the expropriators."

Today we see former staunch Communists in the role of capitalists and landowners. It appears "history teaches that it teaches for nothing."

Konstantin

Rehabilitating a traitor

Acting on someone's instigation, the magazine continues to discuss the Vlasov theme. The author of one piece wrote about the historic role of this traitor. The mutinous general allegedly used Germany's military power for an early abolition of Stalin's totalitarian regime. The author of the latter even described this tactic as "revolutionary defeatism." The very term was taken from Lenin's theses "Concerning War."

I think the matter is much more simple. Some cowards preferred Nazi captivity to honestly fulfilling their duty. Vlasov betrayed his own people.

A.Luchnikov,
war veteran,
Lieutenant-Colonel (Ret.)

Bobruisk

THE WAY I SEE IT

Drawing by Victor Bogorad

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Yeltsin's idea of a "commonwealth of different speeds" is being implemented in a way too speedy for Russia

Russia has always borrowed from Europe not the best, but that which she was able to, by virtue of her natural and cultural peculiarities and in proportion with her rulers' intellectual and political potential. The idea of creating a "commonwealth of different speeds" recently expressed by President Yeltsin was actualized with an unprecedented quickness on October 8 and 9 in the course of the CIS summit in Bishkek. This idea has its origin in the history of the attempt at European, or more precisely, West European integration. Its essence is the rejection of a unified integration model providing for conversion of cooperation program into a sort of menu card from which every partner chooses something to his taste.

It's only natural that this idea emerged and periodically reappears during a moment when there is a daring initiative in the direction of greater integration only to be thwarted due to opposition by one or several EC member countries. Today the "Europe of two speeds" is vehemently discussed because the Danes said "no" to the European political alliance, while the French "yes" didn't sound convincing enough. The practical implications of this are that a political alliance will be formed only by those countries where the opposition won't prevent it, while the rest will remain outside the alliance, though continuing to participate in economic integration.

A similar differentiation among CIS members occurred in Bishkek. Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrghyzstan, Uzbekistan and Belarus made up a core of the advocates of a close economic and, what's more, military and political integration. They weren't even squeamish about such a "dish" in the integration menu card, worked out at the Russian President consent by the most dynamic and pragmatic post-Soviet leader, President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, as the Coordination Council, a prototype of a unitary government of ex-Soviet republics. Another four states are ready to preserve the ruble zone, a single currency and financial space. These are Armenia, Moldova, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Ukraine and Azerbaijan agree only to the softest of integration projects, while Georgia, declared a "West-oriented country" by her leader Eduard Shevardnadze last week, deems acceptable the status of an observer as a non-CIS member country.

The absence of conflicts at the Bishkek discussions demonstrated the advantageous aspects of the "free integration formula." Each president on behalf of his country chose what he believed suitable, without complaining of others' haste or foot-dragging on the integration issue. However, the question arises, what use will the greater part of CIS member states make of their freedom, and the Bishkek summit has demonstrated that the majority's choice is in favor of centrifugal and not centripetal tendencies. In addition, the position of the advocates of a fuller integration, Boris Yeltsin and Nursultan Nazarbayev, who held bilateral negotiations after the summit, is weaker than that taken by its opponents, Leonid Kravchuk of Ukraine and Turkmen President Saparmurad Niyazov, who also held bilateral talks after the meeting in Bishkek.

To cite a few examples. Armenia and Belarus still adhere to the ruble zone, although they have already started printing their own banknotes. Moldovan leaders speak about the priority of integration with kindred Romania and regard Moldova's participation in the CIS as a means of solving the problems inherited from the USSR in a more civilized and peaceful way. Azerbaijan gets increasingly involved in the ongoing integration process with Turkey, while the Ukrainians and the Turkmen are busily implementing the idea of cooperation with Iran in mining and transporting gas from Turkmenia to Europe. If we take into consideration the armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as tension in the relations between Russia and Georgia, it appears that the "commmonwealth of different speeds" is fastly approaching its end.

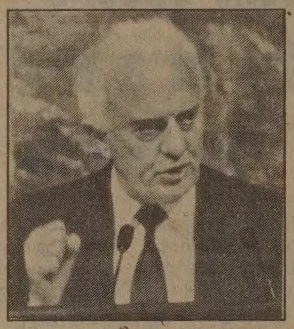
Russia seems absolutely unprepared for this prospect, since her leaders intend to achieve any kind of integration of the Eurasian lands inherited from Russian emperors, although they try to do this by other means than those resorted to by the communists. The process of establishing bilateral relations between the CIS member states is extremely slow. Evidently the Russian government secretly hopes that these bilateral relations won't dominate, rather being dissolved in the multilateral integration process.

The Bishkek summit seems to have put these naive assumptions to an end.

Vladimir Kulistikov

THIS WEEK

■ Although it did not last long, the election campaign in Georgia was conducted on such a scale that it struck the imagination of Georgians characterized by generous nature and an inclination for expressiveness. At first, hot water was supplied to flats in Tbilisi after a long interval. Secondly, petrol appeared at filling stations, true, at the exorbitant price of 60 rubles a litre. Thirdly, municipal transport more or less functioned. All this was supposed to attract citizens to polling stations like bees to honey. However, the creative thinking of inventors of Georgia's electoral system didn't end here. Georgian legislators tried hard to improve the political system of their country, making it almost unique in world practice. For instance, they abolished the post of President. The Chairman of Parliament was declared the highest ranking man in the republic. He had to be elected separately, by direct and secret suffrage, that is, as President. In reality, he is invested with presidential powers. What's the purpose of these innovations then? The point is that formally Georgia has its president. True, he was deposed in a coup, but no one "cancelled" his de jure. The ruse, worthy of a cunning Odysseus, was invented as an attempt to give a postfactum legal backing to the coup along with the powers of Eduard Shevardnadze: we say "Chairman of the Parliament," meaning "President." No one doubted that Eduard Shevardnadze would take the post of Chairman of the Parliament. Under a recently adopted law, even a third of the votes cast by those going to the polls is enough to give him a win.



Once more in the role of Georgia's helmsman?

■ While Eduard Shevardnadze rivalled for the post of Chairman unopposed and naturally won, there were more than enough candidates for parliamentary seats, and the contest between them was tough. As many as 47 parties and organizations announced their intention to take part in the election. True, no more than ten of them represent a real political force. Among them are the October 11 and Peace blocs, the Greens, the National Democratic Party, the Charter-91, the Unity bloc, and the Ilya Chavchavadze society. It is difficult to say how the 234 seats in the parliament will be distributed. Though formally the election is called "all-Georgian," it did not actually take place in seven or eight districts (Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Western Georgia, where the positions of supporters of the former president are strong). These districts account for about 10 percent of the electorate. In the opinion of news analysts, the election will not bring peace and calm to Georgia. On the contrary, it will most likely increase political tension and confrontation, with Abkhazia and South Ossetia in particular. Though observers noted a certain decline in hot-spot fighting during the election, many of them forecast a full-scale war in Georgia in the near future. A lull before a storm?

■ The debates in the Russian parliament over the Gaidar cabinet's program of deepening economic reform were unusually high-pitched. The majority of deputies took an unequivocal stand this time. There were no proposals using phrases like "take into consideration," "point out" or "recommend." A sharply worded parliamentary decision rejected the program. It described the present socio-economic situation in Russia as critical. The parliament was not satisfied with the government's efforts in carrying out socio-economic reforms. The deputies demanded that the cabinet submit within a month "a package of concrete anti-crisis measures" designed for the next few months. Thus, the program of deepening economic reform was buried.

■ If Mikhail Gorbachev thought he would get away with only a 100-ruble fine for his refusal to appear in the Constitutional Court, he was deeply mistaken, as he was more than once in the past. The fine was followed by the Constitutional Court's request to forbid Gorbachev to travel abroad. The ex-President's attempt to launch a counterattack was immediately rebuffed by President Yeltsin's decree on establishing a financial academy and transferring to it the entire complex of buildings occupied by the International Foundation of Socio-Economic and Political Research, widely known as the Gorbachev Foundation. Turning up for work, the employees of the Foundation saw that the doors were sealed. Police units had been stationed around the buildings. Some policemen had handcuffs hanging on their belts. Several police cars and buses with reserve units were standing not far from the central entrance. At an improvised press conference Gorbachev said, in particular, that during his stay in France, Minister of Justice Fyodorov called the ex-president a criminal, adding that his place was in prison. "I'm afraid that some people will find themselves in prison earlier," Gorbachev commented. The scandal began to assume the character of a squabble when, in a conversation with correspondents, Raisa Gorbacheva described the police action as "hooliganism." But everything was settled in the end. The doors were opened, and the employees were allowed in. The Foundation was promised 1,000 sq. metres of floor space for the continuation of fruitful and creative work. Nevertheless, the conflict has not died down. Thrilling future chapters can be expected.

Police no longer stand guard, but the conflict has not gone away
Photo by V. Filonov/MT

■ Rudyard Kipling wouldn't have written his famous lines, "West is West, and East is East" if he had accompanied Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev during his trip to the West several days ago. This trip differed from past voyages of oriental rulers to Europe and America, which were meant to impress the unfaithful with the lustre of decorations, imposing grandeur and colourful speeches devoid of content.

A modern, dynamic, European-minded statesman visited Europe and then the United States. He surprised his hosts not by the lustre of jewels but by the brightness of original ideas, not by a pompous speech, but by a serious and businesslike approach to

the solution of major political problems, not by the unshakeable confidence that his territorial possessions are the hub of the universe, but by a broad, "stereoscopic" vision of world problems.

■ President Nazarbayev's speech at the UN General Assembly produced a furor thanks to these qualities. His proposals to convene a special session of the General Assembly or an international conference for the discussion of problems in the post-confrontation epoch, to set up a fund for UN peace keeping efforts, and to reorganize the United Nations, the Security Council included, in line with the new realities in the world community met with a favourable response. In his clearly worded and well-reasoned speech, the Kazakh leader substantiated the need for distinguishing the rights of national minorities from the right of nations to self-determination. In his opinion, the implementation of this right could lead to the "atomization" of the world community. Nazarbayev also put forward an interesting plan for holding, in stages, a conference for interaction and confidence measures in Asia. The plan would cover a period till the year 2005.

Nazarbayev's speeches were devoid of traditional oriental secrecy. In the United Nations, for instance, he frankly spoke about the difficulties experienced by the Commonwealth of Independent States and growing instability in the Commonwealth. With the aim of reducing tension, he called for strengthening the "zones of stability" in the CIS and setting up a regional centre or a UN commission for conflict-preventing diplomacy in Central Asia. Nazarbayev suggested that the headquarters of this body should be located in Alma Ata, capital of Kazakhstan.

■ In the Crimea, several thousand Tatars, who gathered in front of the parliament's building, tried to capture it by storm. The conflict began after a settlement unlawfully erected by Tatars in the Krasny Rai village, near Alushta, had been pulled down on October 1. A serious clash with policemen followed, and several dozen Tatars were arrested. In reply to these actions by the authorities, the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people called for a general mobilization and demanded that "the arrested should be immediately freed and criminal proceedings instituted against those who led and carried out the brutal action in the Krasny Rai village."

One of the demands was soon fulfilled. The people arrested in the Krasny Rai village were released. In the meantime it was announced that "the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people has established close contacts with the Confederation of Highland Peoples of the Caucasus, Tatarstan and Azerbaijan."

The situation which arose in the Crimea in connection with the protests by Crimean Tatars was disussed at a special meeting of the Crimean parliament. It assessed the activity of the Mejlis, its local structures and the organization of the Crimean Tatar national movement as unconstitutional and ordered the law-enforcement bodies of the republic to end their activity in keeping with existing laws and to take measures for compensating the material damage in court. One more volcano of national discontent seems to be awakening in the Commonwealth, as if there weren't enough.

■ There was great jubilation in Azerbaijan's Interior Ministry several days ago. By a presidential decree, Minister of the Interior, Iskander Gamidov, was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General. However, journalists reacted in a different way to the Minister's success. They are highly displeased by the move. The issue at stake is that in the last few weeks Gamidov has beaten three journalists – the managing editor of the newspaper *Aidynlyg*, the editor of the newspaper *Aina*, Djakhangir Guseinov, and Moscow journalist Victoria Ivleva. Guseinov got it more than others. Two bodyguards held him by his hands, while the Minister personally beat him, threatening others with a pistol. He compelled Guseinov to eat his own newspaper. In reply to this savage reprisal, the editors of 36 major newspapers of Azerbaijan made an ultimatum to the authorities. They demanded that the President should properly assess the Interior Minister's actions and ensure journalists' rights. If the authorities fail to fulfil these demands, the editors threatened to declare a week-long strike. However, there was no reaction on the part of the authorities.

CARTOON OF THE WEEK

Drawing by Vladimir Mochalov

■ Gogol's phrase about Russia being famous for its fools and bad roads seems to be as pertinent today as it was in his time. Omsk radio made it known several days ago that an initiative group had been formed in Krasnoyarsk, central Siberia, to campaign for renaming all towns of Russia which contain the word "red," because it is the colour of "totalitarianism." The group proposes to begin the renaming campaign with its home city Krasnoyarsk (Red-Valley City). In its opinion, it should be named Beloyarsk (White-Valley City). Russia has already seen campaigns of this kind.

■ It is reported from Yekaterinburg that a young couple have decided to name their newly born child Voucher in honour of the privatization program declared by President Yeltsin.

Quotation of the week

"Society must know that it is simply dangerous to deal with this man in the future. In his person we see a man who explodes stability in Russia. The time has come to speak openly about this. The man has many desires, including the wish to appear as a dictator. This is a fact, though he fully denies it."

A comment by Mikhail Poltoranin, Minister of the Press and Information of Russia, about Ruslan Khasbulatov, Chairman of the Russian Parliament

A series of lost opportunities

The Abkhazian offensive shows that Ardzinba and his men are loath to adhere to the Moscow agreement

There are 97,000 Abkhazians in Abkhazia and 4 million Georgians in Georgia. No wonder the Abkhazians are so fond of noting the 40:1 ratio in favour of the Georgians. They also seize every opportunity to stress that Georgia is armed with the sophisticated weaponry that Russia had handed over to it as a former USSR republic, whereas they, the Abkhazians had to fight for the weapons they have. No wonder nobody expected so serious a military success.

Who furnished the tanks?

What made for this victory in the field? Firstly, the high combat potential. "One Abkhazian or one Chechen is worth 10 Georgians" Dzhohar Dudayev arrogantly declares. An exaggeration, yet...

Abkhazian Guardsmen strictly observe temperance: in fact, I never once had an occasion to see either at the front lines or in the streets an armed man or soldier in uniform, who would reek of alcohol. As for the Georgian Guardsmen, there seem to be less sober men among them than drunks. The Abkhazians aim when they fire, saying, "we have no surplus ammunition." But wherever the State Council Guardsmen are deployed, you hear them shooting off their guns incessantly. In fact, one fails to discover subordination or military discipline among them except perhaps for the pips on their shoulder-boards. At the Abkhazian headquarters one easily discriminates between officers and rankers even without the pips.

As for the North Caucasians, whom the Georgians are inclined to dub gangsters and underworld criminals – most likely some are – they apper to be well disciplined and organized. They either join Abkhazian units or form their own units but unreservedly obey Abkhazian commanding officers. In short, this aid means much for the Abkhazians.

In the second place, the Abkhazians have rapidly acquired powerful weaponry which has come as a bitter pill to Russia. Thus, they captured three tanks in the fighting.

However, more than three tanks were involved in the offensive mounted against Gagra. The only source from which they can obtain weaponry is Russia. So at what level was the decision taken to transfer weaponry to the Abkhazians?

It is simplest to conjecture – which incidentally may be deduced from earlier Karabakh experience – that some Russian army officers independently undertook to provide the Abkhazians with weapons, either out of greed or out of compassion for "a small nation."

Why did the Abkhazians rush to break through to the Russian border? As from late October on the mountain passes, through which North Caucasian volunteers came in, are blocked, the only chance to sustain a link with the North Caucasus is to reach the Russian border in the plains.

What enabled the Abkhazians to so rudely and unquestionably violate the agreement? They did not even try to employ the usual pretext of claiming that their adversaries were responsible. For that matter, scarcely would that have held water. It was obvious that the offensive had been preplanned, that all the armour had been massed in the Bzyb River dale and that the H-hour had been plotted to anticipate the closing of the mountain passes. The only reason for slighting the agreement was that it was of no concern.

Why then did the Abkhazians sign the agreement?

Eduard Shevardnadze came to Moscow on September 3 with the concisely worded demand to have the detachments and individual volunteers from the Caucasian Highlands Peoples Confederation withdrawn from Georgia, as he regards Abkhazia as part of Georgia.

Vladislav Ardzinba was as resolute, demanding that the Georgian State Council forces be pulled out of Abkhazia.

Whereas Shevardnadze and Yeltsin appeared as full-fledged parties to the negotiations, Ardzinba's status was rather hazy. In other words, as Boris Yeltsin, who chaired the conference, explained in the process, the agreement could have been signed even without Ardzinba, as it was enough for him and Shevardnadze to do so.

Pro forma everything was correct, with the heads of the two states, one of whom is responsible for the presence of its armed citizens in the territory of a sovereign state, negotiating between themselves. However, it was obvious by September 3 that neither the Russian President, nor the leaders of the North Caucasian republics could ensure a Confederation pull-out. However, Ardzinba announced during the talks that were the State Council troops to withdraw from Abkhazian territory, he would assume responsibility for a Confederation pull-out.

It would have been natural at this juncture for Russia, acting as mediator, to get both demands met as reciprocal. Yet, that would have placed Russia in a rather vulnerable position, as it is one thing when Georgia wants Russian troops to withdraw from its territory, and quite another when Russia tells Georgia where and how it should deploy its own troops.

Apparently this consideration, plus Shevardnadze's arguments to safeguard Abkhazian roads, impelled Yeltsin to eventually adopt a "pro-Georgian" wording. Under the final text, it was assumed that while North Caucasians would be withdrawn from Abkhazia, State Council troops would remain in a force necessary to guard the railroad "and other vital installations."

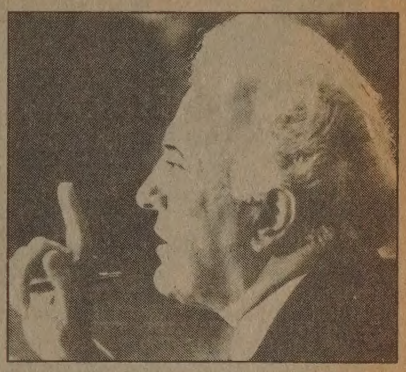
An odd wording this, to say the least. Firstly, to guard just one railroad the military contingent must be greatly increased, not reduced. Secondly, to this day the State Council Guardsmen have sooner upset the normal tenor of life in Abkhazia than facilitated the well-ordered operation of roads and railways. Thirdly, it was not at all clear why the Abkhazian leaders could not be made responsible for safeguarding the railway inside Abkhazian territory. The Abkhazians did not derive any practical advantage from the agreement, except for Ardzinba's signature which served, as it were, to legalize his status as a party to the talks. This is the only explanation one finds for the Abkhazian speaker having nevertheless initialled the text of the agreement after much hesitation. Yet literally the very next day he, to all practical intents, disavowed his own signature.

Ardzinba overestimates his adversaries

In the rapidity with which the conflict has escalated from political contradictions to a full-scale war, Abkhazia is thus far definitely ahead of other hot spots. Only two months ago Gagra was crammed with holidaymakers: today it is bombed.

Vladislav Ardzinba scornfully notes:

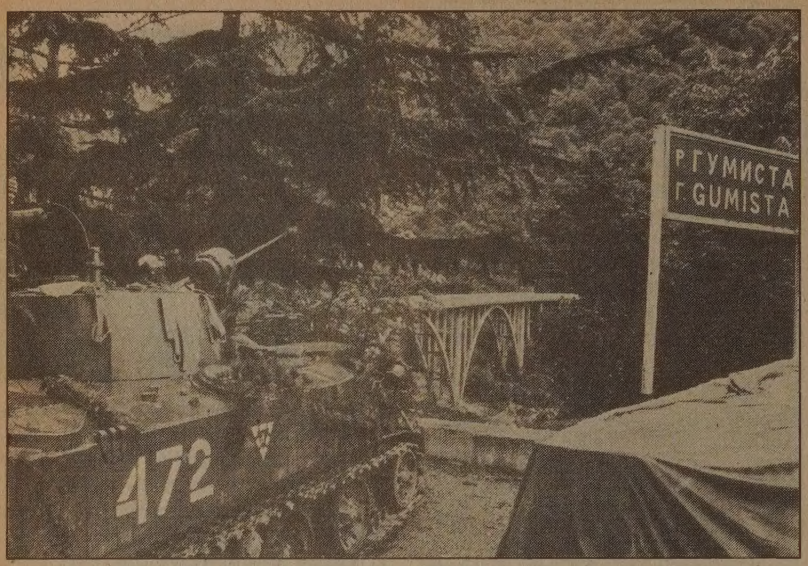
"I can understand Shevardnadze. Ioseliani has freed all underworld criminals from prison. (Which is true. I heard complaints in Tbilisi that nobody could get recidivist murderers incarcerated. – **G.K.**) Such were men who were armed, garbed in uniform and dispatched to Abkhazia, so that they not remain in Georgia proper."



Eduard Shevardnadze has now been elected Chairman of Georgia's parliament. It was enough for him to get slightly more than 11 percent of the total vote, as according to law only a third of the total electorate were to go to the polls and of this number at least a third had to vote for him. To elect a president that would have been inadequate, but up for election was the Speaker, an office that in most countries is settled by parliamentarians themselves. Be that as it may, this former First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Georgian Communist Party, ex-Politburo member, one-time USSR Foreign Minister, and previous Georgian State Council Chairman by far excelled the required vote. Of the electorate 80 percent went to the polls, and of this numberr 86 percent voted for Shevardnadze, which made a very impressive turnout inasmuch as there was no polling in Abkhazia or South Ossetia, while the elections in Western Georgia proceeded in conditions of an unstopped civil war.

Abkhazian leaders categorically reject any connection between the Abkhazian parliament's July 23 statement as to the "restoration of the 1925 Constitution" and the August 14 incursion of the Georgian troops. Which is quite understandable as they want to be absolved of all responsibility for the blood shed. On the other hand, from the very outset the Chairman of the Georgian State Council had raised other arguments having no bearing on Abkhazia's status, averring that troops had been moved in to free the hostages seized by Gamsakhurdia's followers and subsequently to guard the railway. Yet those Georgian leaders who talk of the inviolability of Georgia's borders and its territorial integrity are perplexed when asked whether Georgia's integrity has been consolidated since August 14.

In Abkhazia the July 23 announcement was regarded as a move in the long uphill negotiations for higher status. Invocation of



The Abkhazian military categorically denied having T-72 tanks. Now it denies having T-80 tanks
Photo by N.Galkin

the 1925 Constitution implied that Abkhazia sought to negotiate with Georgia on an equal footing. Between 1921 and 1931 Abkhazia had existed as a Treaty Soviet Socialist Republic within Georgia, a status that was recorded in the 1925 Constitution.

The idea was evidently to exploit Georgia's weak statehood. Firstly, to date the Georgian leadership is not legitimized. Secondly, one did not seriously see any considerable popular backing for this leadership. Thirdly, Georgia is evidently exhausted by the perennial war in South Ossetia and the drawn-out civil war.

Within this context Abkhazia seemed to present a most favourable picture, inasmuch as it still retained in effect the old governing structures and, consequently, the old economic and administrative authority.

The Abkhazian leaders did not allow themselves to be embroiled in the conflict between Gamsakhurdia and the State Council. They remained strictly neutral, not subscribing to the Georgian parliamentary faction's qualification of Gamsakhurdia's deposition as a coup d'etat, while unlike the Georgian authorities, they have allowed rallies to be freely held in Abkhazia both for and against Gamsakhurdia. In these conditions Ardzinba expected that his haggling would produce a tangible result in the form of serious political concessions. However, he manifestly overestimated his adversaries.

The overwhelming minority

Underlying the confrontation is quite objective contradiction. On the one hand, in Abkhazia the Abkhazians comprise but 17 percent, which is an obvious minority. Yet on the other hand, they want to have national statehood, be it even within a federation. They argue this – provided we discard the patently insoluble controversy around "historical affiliation" – by claiming that the Abkhazians have nowhere else to live. Meanwhile the Georgian state authorities deliberately populate Abkhazia with Georgians to dissolve and assimilate the indigenous residents. The Abkhazians reply that a state of their own presents the one and only chance of surviving as a nation.

Admittedly, by 1991 the Abkhazians had already made great progress in this respect. Thus, the current parliament was elected according to the quota principle with the proportion of Abkhazians, Georgians and other ethnic units legislatively regulated with 28 Abkhazian deputies, 26 Georgian deputies, and so on. Moreover, the rights of Georgian electors were deliberately infringed. The quotas were conceived to give the "Abkhazian faction," which is supported by most non-Georgian deputies, a simple, but not a two-thirds, majority.

In the upshot the Abkhazian parliament has been unable to adopt a single decision requiring a qualified majority. Actually, its Speaker pushed through such decisions by means of a simple majority as provisional expedients.

The appointment of officials requires in the main a simple parliamentary majority and as a result Abkhazians fill all the posts of district executives. This, the Georgians say, has established ethnocracy whereby the majority is suppressed by the minority. The Abkhazians retort by noting that unless they enjoy privileges in their own land, it would soon be impossible to discriminate between Abkhazia and Georgia.

One can understand why the Georgian deputies who are supported by Tbilisi, want to revert to the normal democratic "one man – one vote" procedure. Yet one can also understand why Abkhazians fear that in that case they would not be protected as a national unit. Yet as recently as in 1990 the alternative option had been suggested of installing a bicameral parliament, wherein one chamber would be formed via territorial election, and the other, that of nationalities, would be elected by the various ethnic units, with each represented by an equal number of deputies regardless of numerical quantity. At the time the Georgians rejected that.

For quite long the political confrontation in Abkhazia did not develop into interethnic animosity. Even in late September, when the war was in full swing, in Gagra Georgians protected the vacated dwellings of their Abkhazian neighbours even to the point of offering them shelter in some cases.

Meanwhile in the Gudauta area Abkhazians bought bread for their Georgian fellow-villagers, who were afraid to go to town. Had the war been terminated at that point, Abkhazia would have swiftly reverted to normal. However, after the Abkhazian offensive, this chance has evidently been lost.

The history of the conflict is one of a series of missed opportunities for a peaceful solution. One such opportunity was lost by the Georgians on August 14 when they essayed the obviously foredoomed attempt of resolving the matter by force, even though they have little in the way of force. Russia also missed the boat, when at the September 3 talks she did not persist in demanding that the State Council troops be withdrawn. Finally, the Abkhazians missed an opportunity, when on October 1 they staked on military action without waiting for the new October 3 conference.

At the September 3 talks Russia's mediation met the wishes of both sides. However, today it is hard to say which side trusts Russia less. Withal there do not seem to be any new mediators on the scene for the time being.

In short, the war is increasingly acquiring the familiar Karabakh features.

Galina Kovalskaya

GAGRA–GUDAUTA–
KVARCHELI–SUKHUMI

Isn't it dangerous to "forget" about Russia?

One hears more frequently of late that the West is beginning to forget about Russia and has gotten tired of its arduous problems. *Moscow News* recently published a commentary on this subject contributed by *Financial Times* correspondent John Lloyd. In his piece, addressed to Russian readers, the British journalist seems to apologize to them by referring to a host of concerns facing the West, from the monetary crisis to the US presidential election. These problems, he writes, do not allow the West to pay as much attention to new Russia and its needs as it did before. From now on the Russians will have to rely mainly on themselves. Such is the stern conclusion the British journalist tried to bring home to them.

He indeed has a point. One could mention here the appalling famine in Somalia, the war in Yugoslavia and many other factors which divert the attention of "rich nations" from new poor "relatives," such as Russia and other East European countries. Russia does not always look attractive to its partners because of discords in its corridors of power, delays in the adoption of market-economy laws, and the threat of strikes and riots. It would do well to first restore order at home and then to invite guests, especially necessary when those guests are bringing gifts or can offer loans.

Important as they are for Russia today, aid and credits are nevertheless not the first priority. To put its house in order and clean out the rubbish left over by the defunct regime, Russia must break not only with the old ideology, but also with the numerous customs, habits, notions and prejudices inherited from the past. For instance, it must give up extreme secrecy, reserve and the notion of the outside world as something alien and hostile. This can be achieved only through close and everyday contact with those who have not had harmful habits and preposterous notions, through political, spiritual and economic contacts.

New Russia is striving for such contacts. It has overcome the former self-isolation. Next year even exit visas are to be abolished. Moreover, it also helps other republics of the former USSR integrate in the world community, just as it helps them carry out their reforms. This merely increases the burden of Russia's transition to a market economy. Kazakh President Nazarbayev noted in an interview with *Le Monde* that all member states of the Commonwealth are passing through hard times. They are particularly hard for the Russian Federation because the situation in other republics of the Commonwealth depends on the success of reforms in Russia. That is why, Nazarbayev added, the West should give priority to relations with Russia.

Unfortunately, the West has other priorities today. It will be recalled that local armed conflicts and other crises broke out during the Cold War as well. However, they did not push Russia, the former Soviet Union, into the background in international relations. On the contrary, it remained in the foreground, because the West always feared the possibility of Soviet interference. Does this mean the West will show no attention, interest or even respect if not in constant fear, without "a phantom haunting Europe"?

I am not of this opinion. However, such a view is prompted by some recent developments. In any case, they indicate signs of narrow-minded egocentrism. One can mention Washington's stubborn reluctance to give Russian uranium access to the American market. Japan seeks the return of the Kuril islands by refusing otherwise to expand economic ties with Russia. German leaders point to the expenditure involved in the "development" of eastern lands when some or other economic concessions to new Russia have to be made. Are these references pertinent? Is it worth recalling who helped the two Germanys reunite and how?

It has long been known there is no room for the feeling of gratitude in politics. Some circles in post-industrial countries are too straightforward in making their calculations with the absence of such gratitude. They believe that impoverished and devastated Russia has no way out. It is certainly true in terms of geography. But is it so simple in politics? What will be the outcome of conflicts which have burst forth on the periphery of the former Union and which, as experience shows, no one can stamp out without Russia?

It is well known that the interests of pro-Western secular Turkey are clashing with those of fundamentalist Iran in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Less known is another fact. As if by order, Iranian newspapers have lately elaborated on the following thesis: it would not be bad for such large countries as Iran, China with its billion population and dynamic economy, and Russia with its remaining military-technical potential (first of all nuclear) to form an alliance, of a type not officially registered but reliably cemented by common interests. The common interests can only mean a joint opposition to the West, meaning the "rich and self-complacent nations" in general.

In the cultural and political legacy of Russia there are certainly grounds for projections of this kind: Slavophiles, Dostoyevsky among them, who advised Russians to look towards Asia, not Europe, and Lenin's famous idea of uniting the masses of people in China, India and Russia. Similar ideas and concepts are exaggerated today, though in a rather abstract tenor so far, in the national-patriotic circles of the "left-right opposition." But abstractions can transform into reality if the West self-centredly pretends not to notice its new great partner in the building of a post-communist world order.

Dmitry Volsky

The Zhirinovsky phenomenon

The Vologda Region peasants want to see Malenkov, Brezhnev or Zhirinovsky at the helm of the state...

Say "Zhirinovsky" to any leader of the united anti-Western opposition – a conglomerate of "patriots" and Communists of all hues, including "Communists-patriots" and "Commusnists-nationalists" as well as "Democrats-patriots" who are agonizingly looking for accord, collaborating or wrangling with one another – and you will see him wince in disgust.

As to the leaders of the pro-Western bloc, they unanimously despite Zhirinovsky. Nevertheless, one gets the impression that in both camps Zhirinovsky is regarded as a menace, which their leaders find hard to define but which haunts them and makes them ill at ease. Even President Kravchuk of Ukraine uses the name of Vladimir Volfovich Zhirinovsky as a bugaboo in public discussions with his obdurate MPs. "Do you want us to deal with Zhirinovsky's Russia instead of Yeltsin's Russia?" he asked them on one occasion.

Actually, Zhirinovsky in today's Russia is a classical type of an outsider – an impostor, if you like, who always comes to the fore, as if from nowhere, in troubled times, at the moment when the forces contending for power begin to lose the confidence of the public.

Nuclear Robin Hood

If asked to put in a nutshell what sets Zhirinovsky apart from a crowd of Establishment politicians, I'd quote his own symbol of faith: "It is necessary to unite the nation in the face of the external enemy."

Not that this idea is altogether alien to the politicians of the "patriotic" camp of the opposition. Actually, their invectives against the "external enemy" are as, if not more, implacably furious as Zhirinovsky's own tirades. The difference is, however, that theirs is the attitude of ideologists, and Zhirinovsky's, that of a practical politician. For them this is a matter of propaganda, and for Zhirinovsky a matter of action. He is prepared to use nuclear blackmailing against the West the day after he is elected President.

At the June 1991 presidential election campaign, Zhirinovsky promised to feed the nation in 72 hours. In what way? "It is very simple, really: I shall order 1.5 million troops into the former GDR, brandish arms there, nuclear arms included, and there'll be enough food to go around." In other words, he is going to plunder the sated West and feed a hungry Russia.

That would, of course, be a glaring violation of all the rules of the international political game. So what? This is not much of an argument for Zhirinovsky, whose chief rule is to break all the rules.

A universe unto himself

Western politicians may assure themselves and their electorate without end that nuclear nightmare, which hung over us for half a century is over, that now the world is no longer threatened with instantaneous destruction. Zhirinovsky knows, however, that our super-high-yield SS-18 missiles will be still targeted on the West until the year of 2003, at least. He reckons on becoming President of Russia much earlier than that. And the moment he becomes one, all the previous treaties will become null and void.

It is true that Yeltsin has promised to remove the missiles form combat duty. Only Zhirinovsky is not going to live up to this promise if he becomes President. Neither does he intend to observe any international conventions based on "nuclear parity" or "mutual deterrence." He cares no more for "deterrence" than Saddam Hussain does. As distinct from conventional politicians, Russian or Western, **he is prepared to risk mutual destruction.**

It is this readiness to take risks, this freedom from morality or political conventionalities that give him a free hand.

Those who object that this is a case of elementary blackmail just fail to realize that, following Hitler, Zhirinovsky creates an entirely new political universe ruled by naked violence and crackpot determination to risk not only one's own, but the world's very existence. This new universe precisely reflects the situation in his country which is in a state of total collapse. He is going to impose this situation on the rest of the world.

"World order"

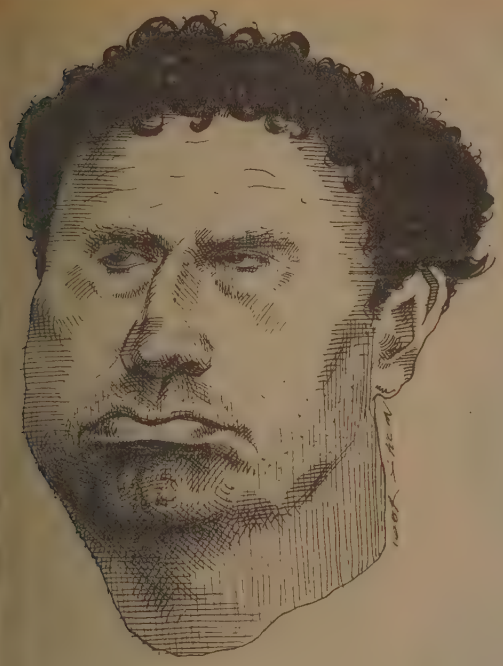
Let Presidents of the Western countries, intoxicated with their seeming victory in the cold war, talk about the "new world order." Having learnt nothing from the mistakes made by their post World War I predecessors, with their disregard for the Hitler phenomenon, today's Western leaders do not take the nuclear Robin Hood phenomenon seriously either. In the meantime, Zhirinovsky is certain that by their hopeless conventionality, they have dealt him all the trump cards. As a result, he is now safe to call their bluff and to blow up all the conventionalities of civilization. He will talk to them yet in a language of his own they have never heard before. How much do you think Paris is worth? – he will ask. And London? Washington and Los Angeles? How much are you prepared to pay to keep me from erazing them from the face of the earth with my missiles? Think I'm bluffing? Want a bet? Well, where do I start?

Nothing can be easier than to brush this latter-day Robin Hood, his unbridled ambitions and fantastic projects aside. Russian politicians (let alone the Western ones who simply do not know anything about Zhirinovsky) would have certainly done just that, I am sure, hadn't millions of votes been cast for Zhirinovsky in Russia. He finished third at the 1991 presidential elections after the leaders of national calibre like Boris Yeltsin, Chairman of Russian Parliament, and Nikolai Ryzhkov, ex-Prime Minister of the USSR, leaving all the other opposition leaders far behind.

Six million votes is no joke for a new arrival on the national political scene who didn't even have an organization to back him (and who, unlike Ross Perot, had neither the time nor the money to form it). It should also be borne in mind that all the country's party machines without exception, left- and right-wing, official and unofficial, made an all-out effort to stop him.

Unlike his rivals, Zhirinovsky has quick and temptingly simple answers to all questions. What is to be done about strikes? "I shall put all the strikers behind bars, train the racketeers and send them abroad to defend our national interests there, bring in cheap manpower from abroad and compel them to work like hell for a hundred rubles a month." What about the breakaway republics? "We've got to stop selling them fuel, cut them off from outside economic aid, and they will crawl back to us on their stomachs. Take Georgia, for example: it is falling apart and coming back to Russia as a province... This is enough to make Central Asia return to Russia of its own free will as a province, too... This is the way to retrieve the Transcaucasus, Central Asia and the Baltics." What's more, "Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey will join this confederation in the long run."

Nothing can be easier – and more dangerous – than to dismiss Zhirinovsky as a clown, and to forget all about his crazy projecs. That was exactly how they treated Hitler in his time.



Drawing by Igor Shein

Whom does he represent?

Obviously it would have been strange if our society, its moral degradation, aggravated by political breakup and rapid social polarization, would not have produced more Zhirinovskys than one. Actually, there are now millions in this country who talk, think and feel like him. Those were the very electorate who accepted Vladimir Volfovich Zhirinovsky as a kindred spirit and cast their votes for him in May 1991.

If that is really so, then he is Russia's only politician today who knows precisely what his massive political following is like, deliberately gears his political strategy to its sentiments and is certain that the continued economic disaster, which is breeding the lumpen proletariat non-stop, paves his way to power.

Such was the hypothesis I wanted to verify by arranging an interview with Zhirinovsky. Frankly, I thought he would be ashamed of his association with the degraded section of society hopelessly crippled by the Soviet past, that he would try to evade my point-blank questions.

What actually happened, however, overwhelmed me. With shocking frankness he admitted that, yes, he relied on Soviet lumpens for support and that, yes, he reckoned on the further degradation of his nation. Here is the relevant fragment of our conversation:

Alexander Yanov. It is very easy to make such promises to people. There is an enormous lumpenized mass which will buy them.

Vladimir Zhirinovsky. It will buy them all right.

A.Ya. But, after all, the nation is not composed of lumpens alone. Lots of people retain common sense.

V.Zh. They do. They vote against, but they will be in the minority.

A.Ya. So far they are in a substantial majority. Do you reckon on the degradation of the masses?

V.Zh. I most certainly do!

The sorrows of young Zhirinovsky

Where do such politicians come from? What are the factors in shaping such characters? Personal questions were out of place in our political dialogue with Zhirinovsky. Therefore I had to turn to other sources of information. There are two of more or less detailed Zhirinovsky biographies. The obvious partiality of one is cancelled out by the frank irony of the other. The former – one can say, the one, authorized and published in the journal of Zhirinovsky's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) – is by party journalist S. Plekhanov who had talked with Zhirinovsky for a whole week during the election campaign. The other, non-authorized biography is by Vladimir Nazarov, an independent journalist.

Asked about his ethnic origin, Zhirinovsky gave an answer which has gone down in the annals of Soviet anecdotism: "My mother was Russian, and my father a lawyer."

Vladimir Volfovich Zhirinovsky was born on April 25, 1946, on the margin of the Soviet empire – in Alma Ata (Kazakhstan), where he lived until the age of 18; those years left a bad taste in his mouth. As a young man, he felt a "peripheral Russian," one of those "turned into skilled help of indigenous people who concentrated in their hands the land and its products, distribution functions and power." He suffered intensely from that and never put up with the situation.

The first curious paradox arose in young Zhirinovsky's world view then. As we remember, he thinks it pays "to brandish arms, nuclear arms included" and to rob others. The notions of legitimacy, ownership or law do not exist for him in this respect.

Judging by his reminiscences, he had, surprisingly, an entirely different notion of law and property as a young man. Zhirinovsky was then a staunch legitimist for whom the right to property was sacred, inviolable and **immutable.** Did Kazakhstan, Finland or Alaska once belong to the Russian Empire? They did. Consequently, they still do, because property is eternal and inalienable.

Can these two maxims, which are obviously poles apart, be brought into agreement? Not as far as you or I are concerned. For a lumpen, with his warped mentality, there is no contradiction here. After all, in the former case someone else's property is in question, and in the latter, the empire's. The logic of a GULAG gangster has been elevated to the rank of state politics, that's all.

Zhirinovsky's upbringing

The years that followed did nothing to soothe **his** youthful disappointment. Zhirinovsky came to Moscow in the hope of "escaping from the confines of the social status" reserved for him in Kazakhstan and to find his way into politics. Where else could he accomplish that if not in the heart of his empire? That was in 1964, the year of the overthrow of Khrushchev, when the era of political stagnation began. To Zhirinovsky, however, it meant the only stroke of luck in his life (before his participation in the presidential election campaign). He was accepted to the privileged Oriental Languages Institute under the Moscow University. Even there he found himself lonely.

At that time, Moscow's elite institutes were much like "gilded youth clubs." Naturally, "a young man of humble origins, a hostel dweller who could hardly make ends meet thanks to the meager sums his mother sent him, had no hope of making friends with bons-vivants."

After graduation, Zhirinovsky went to Turkey for a course of advanced language study – and got into some mysterious trouble there, even had to spend a while in a Turkish jail. His career ended at that, of course. He tried to get along somehow, got a job at the Peace Committee and went through a law course at the Moscow University, which he attended after hours. All that held out no promise, however. The breakthrough into politics never materialized. Without politics, "dull, uninteresting life dragged on for decades."

The first political defeat

In Zhirinovsky's apologetic biography there is no hint of him being ever interested in any creative pursuit (even as a hobby). He was neither an athlete nor a musician, nor an artist. He hasn't written a line in his life and is still known only for his election speeches, interviews and lawsuits. He took part in nothing except what could immediately improve his own life prospects. His first political ambition – to get elected the Director of the Mir Publishers where he worked – was thwarted. Only five percent of the people who knew him well voted for him, which was a fraction of the vote he got later, as he was running for Russia's President.

"Having colonies is normal"

How come that a mediocre civil servant of no particular merits suddenly transformed

into the country's most popular opposition leader? Actually, there is nothing extraordinary about that. The man bottled up the bitterness of his frustrations for years. From his imperial torments in Kazakhstan to his dashed hopes for a career in the heart of the empire and to the "uninteresting life" he was doomed to in Brezhnev's Russia – what happened to him made him deeply disappointed with his own self. There was no demand for him until 1989. *Perestroika* created a market for him.

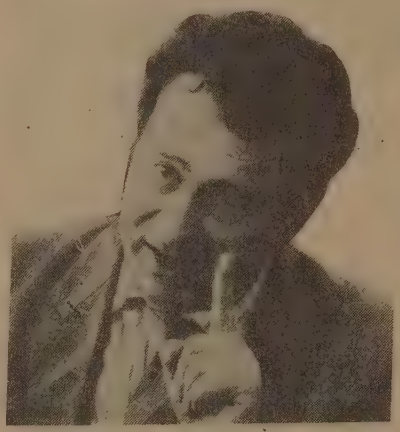
Zhirinovsky's sorrows in the Brezhnev era had nothing to do with the way the country's intellectuals felt then. The latter protested against non-freedom, against the one-party dictatorship's police regime, against the crimes committed by the monopoly party. The empire was to them just one of the ugliest manifestations of that tyranny.

Zhirinovsky had no reason to love the Soviet empire either, of course. His resentment towards it was of a personal rather than of a political nature – it had doomed him to the life of a petty civil servant, deprived him of a future, offered him no opportunity to fulfil himself. Superimposed on his early imperial frustrations in Kazakhstan, this personal resentment led him to the idea that the empire as such was not a bad system of government, after all, but its Soviet form was, because in the Soviet empire the "indigenous nations" forgot their real place and were allowed to concentrate "distributive functions and power" in their hands as if the Russians were no longer the masters of their own empire. The only way to redress this injustice – which he regards as ruinous – is to reconstruct the Russian Empire where the "indigenous nations" would be reduced to the status of "provinces" by force.

That was how the idea, born of childish offences, was transformed by Zhirinovsky into a justification of a colonial, imperial policy. Without a moment's hesitation Zhirinovsky confirmed this in our conversation. "Imperialism and colonial policy are foreign notions... We have no such things here. It was normal for us to have colonies, it was good, it was right."

Although Vladimir Nazarov, his second biographer, did not try to get to the "ideological" reasons for Zhirinovsky's moving away from the democrats and gravitating towards the imperial elite of that time, he conveyed rather accurately, on the whole, Zhirinovsky's political trajectory in 1990. "At first he made an attempt to get close to the democrats, frequented their meetings and rallies. Then he probably realized that he looked out of place next to clever, intelligent and well-mannered people. What especially hurt Zhirinovsky was that far from entering into any discussions with him they even withheld their hands. He was a stranger among them, and he knew it. And then... It's worth quoting this Liberal Democrat's interview with a correspondent of the Lithuanian paper *Respublika:* 'The Baltic region is part of Russia. I shall exterminate you. I shall have radioactive waste buried in the border zone of the Smolensk Region, and you Lithuanians will all die of radiation sickness. I shall evacuate the Russians and the Poles from the danger zone. I am the Almighty, I am a tyrant! I shall act like Hitler...'" Such statements won Zhirinovsky powerful patrons among the CPSU and KGB leaders, the "hawks" in the central and Russian parliaments.

Nazarov's work explains who finances the Liberal Democratic Party established by Zhirinovsky in 1990: "In the archives of the CPSU, deputies found an agreement between the Management Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and the company owned by Andrei Zavidiya (who had run for Vice-Presidency in the Zhirinovsky election campaign). The Bolshevik leaders granted the company an interest-free credit of three million rubles... Now it is clear who foots the LDP's bills."



Nothing can be easier – and more dangerous – than to dismiss Zhirinovsky as a clown, and to forget all about his crazy projects. That was exactly how they treated Hitler in his time

Myths

I met with Zhirinovsky early in June 1992, in the LDP headquarters at Rybnikov bystreet, Moscow. The office of the future President of Great Russia Zhirinovsky hopes of becoming is rather a shabby private apartment which has seen better days. The location is prestigious, however: downtown Mocow, the Sretenka street.

Strangely, no one has as yet clashed with Zhirinovsky in a serious argument. He has been made fun of, jokes are told about him, and many electors who have heard him address public gatherings admire his resourcefulness and courage. After the August putsch attempt, which he openly expressed his solidarity with Muscovites spat him in the face. Cossacks threatened to flog him in public, and in Minsk, he was actually beaten up. But, as far as I know, no one has ever tried to ascertain the intellectual basis of his convictions, to find out whether this "iceberg" has an underwater part, so to say. So I decided to be the first to make such an attempt.

Our conversation disappointed me. In his "underwater part," Vladimir Zhirinovsky turned out to have only a few ill-digested myths Russian nationalists have been trying to keep alive for over a century now. None of them can stand serious criticism. Well, let the reader judge for himself.

The first myth, which, like a whale, props up Zhirinovsky's political universe, "explains" what Russia needs the empire for.

Here is what Zhirinovsky has to say about that: without an empire, "the Russians will become, everywhere, a national minority being slowly annihilated... It will be a slow assassination of the Russian nation, because there is no purely Russian territory... If we take this line in Russia, the Russian people will perish." In other words, the empire is not a luxury but a means of national survival for the Russians.

A look at the map will refute this myth at once. Incidentally, there is a political organization in St. Petersburg which calls itself "Rosses" and calls for the creation of an ethnically pure Russia. On the maps they publish, Russia – even without any "alien" ethnic enclaves ("purely Russian territory") – is still larger than China and the United States. Their Russian population is far in excess of 150 million.

Zhirinovsky's another whale is that the nations which have once constituted the Russian Empire will not survive without it. As a matter of fact, Russia has created them, they wouldn't have been around at all without it. "I was born in Central Asia myself, you see," Zhirinovsky said heatedly, trying to press his point home to me. "We regard it as Russia, not Central Asia. Initially, it was populated by Russians only, and Russians brought civilization there, the Kazakhs lived in nomad tents, they had no electricity, nothing, and all they did was cattle, sheep breeding, like all the primitive communal tribes, there was no state there." I remarked that nevertheless the conquest of Central Asia caused a heavy loss of human life, like that of the Caucasus had. "There were no states in the Caucasus, it was just a tract of wilderness," Zhirinovsky objected.

All that is rubbish, of course. Supposing, however, that the areas east and south of Moscow were, indeed, "tracts of wilderness" even as late as in the last century, and invited the great nation to colonize them. But what about the space west of Moscow? The fact of cultured states being conquered seems to be indisputable. Still, they have to come back to Russia, Zhirinovsky reiterated peremptorily.

A.Ya. Poland and Finland too?

V.Zh. In the long run yes, of course. And Alaska in America.

A.Ya. But Poland was a great power once...

V.Zh. It has never been great, never. This is ancient history, Rzecz Pospolity fell apart!

A.Ya. But it did exist, even when Russia was quite small. And Lithuania was also a great power...

V.Zh. And it will fall apart again. Both Lithuania and Poland will. There will be a Russian-German border.

Zhirinovsky's third whale is racism.

V.Zh. It is, in general, the question of saving the white race, of a threat to its existence. The whites constitute eight percent of the total today. Do you think that 92 percent will put up for very long with eight percent living in better regions, enjoying better diets and longer life expectancy? These 92 percent will claim their rights yet.

A.Ya. Are you a racist, besides everything else?

V.Zh. Not at all, why do you think so? I am talking about the threat to the white nation. If a robber intends to break into my house, do I violate his right to rob my house if I try to stop him? I have the right to warn of the danger, I feel it.

Weakness or strength?

All my attempts to start an intellectual argument with Zhirinovsky failed. All that appeared logical about his reasonings was trivial, and what was non-trivial was illogical. The myths which underlay his conception crumbled upon contact with common sense.

It turned out, for example, that America would be in no position to counter our attempts to take Alaska away from it. Why? "Because it will perish of its own accord. Just as the USSR has." In what way? No one can tell. What, in the case of the United States demise, will become of the white nation the future of which Zhirinovsky seemed to be so concerned about? No one knows.

Just one example will make it clearer than a dozen of arguments what distinguishes him from the other opposition leaders. All of them are furiously protesting against the Southern Kurils being returned to Japan. So is Zhirinovsky, of course. The difference is, however, that the former address the President and the government, and the latter speaks directly to the Japanese. His arguments sound as follows: Hiroshima and Nagasaki not enough for you? Want to have another nuclear holocaust? No? In that case, forget all about the islands. There is neither tact nor elementary common sense in this argument. Nevertheless, it goes down well with provincial Russian audiences.

Thus, it is that Zhirinovsky's intellectual weakness becomes his real strength. He is, undoubtedly, a charismatic leader. No less so than Hitler was. And like Hitler, he is proud of being despised by intellectuals. "How many votes do they have," he asks. "Indeed, Moscow intellectuals are against me. There are a hundred thousand, a million, three million, ten million of them. But I'll need 55 million electorate."

Struggle for votes

Zhirinovsky's calculations are simple enough. Hasn't the Soviet GULAG system bequeathed millions of hopeless cripples incapable of logical reasoning to democratic Russia? Isn't their army being replenished now, from day to day, by social outcasts like the jobless, homeless, demobbed, the wretched refugees from other republics who have suddenly become foreigners in their own country? Every day of continued degradation brings with it thousands of potential recruits for Zhirinovsky's army.

Unlike his rivals, Zhirinovsky has quick and temptingly simple answers to all questions

It only remains now, he thinks, to rally them under a common flag and to lead them to the polls. As a result, Zhirinovsky is the only politician in Russia whose election campaign is in full swing already today. He has already toured a half of Russia, making election speeches, and set up election committees in tens of regions of the country. "Today I am the only one to tour the country and the only one whose name is at the tip of the people's tongues."

Zhirinovsky exaggerates, of course. A poll conducted among potential voters in 13 cities at the end of June – i.e., after our conversation – revealed that had an election been held in July 1992, Yeltsin would have got 33 percent of the vote, and Zhirinovsky, only 5. There is no denying the fact, however, that his campaigning brings results. He left all of his rivals behind, once again, as he had at the May 1991 election, with Nikolai Ryzhkov getting only three percent, Ruslan Khasbulatov, the parliament Speaker, three percent, and Petersburg's mayor Anatoly Sobchak also three percent of the vote.

The results of a recent poll conducted among the Vologda Region peasants overwhelmed sociologists. Asked whom of the Russian politicians they would like to see at the helm of the state, most of them named Malenkov, Brezhnev and Zhirinovsky. Our hero is the only of the threesome who is still around.

Chances

Zhirinovsky's short-term forecast is definite: "The situation will get worse. By March, if not this October, there will be a different political regime in Russia... The patriots will take over in office from the democrats. The right-wing radical forces will prevail." Although these forces are unfriendly towards Zhirinovsky (whose father is a "lawyer," after all), they will come to him cap in hand sooner or later, he is sure of that. After the removal of Yeltsin, you see, there will be no figure of Zhirinovsky's calibre left.

Well, what if Zhirinovsky's presidency is not as unlikely a prospect as it seems to be at a first glance? In conclusion of the article about him, Vladimir Nazarov writes: "Even if Zhirinovsky himself disappears from the CIS' turbulent political scene tomorrow, the 'Zhirinovsky phenomenon' will not. He may well be replaced by someone else, someone more intelligent, better mannered, more restrained – and of Russian nationality."

I am not sure that Nazarov is right. National reputations are not so easy to create. The revolutionary years of 1990-91, when Zhirinovsky created his, were unique in this respect. And then, Moscow abounds in men more intelligent, better mannered and more restrained than Zhirinovsky – and of Russian natioality. Take, for example, Sergei Baburin, Mikhail Astafiev, Victor Aksyuchits, Alexander Prokhanov, Gennady Zyuganov... Each answers Nazarov's description perfectly – and none can compare with Zhirinovsky. Why? Simply because none of them is as reckless (in a lumpen way), as unrestained, amoral, tactless, rude – and as charismatic – as Vladimir Zhirinovsky.

This makes me confident that for as long as the total crisis Russia is now in continues, Zhirinovsky will not depart from its political scene.

In my opinion, the Zhirinovsky problem really consists in whether there are in the country financial forces capable of staking on his strategy of nuclear blackmailing the West. In 1990-91, Zhirinovsky succeeded in convincing Moscow's Krupps and Thyssens of the advantages of such a reckless escapade. Will he manage to make a deal with Moscow moneybags today? I don't know. If he does, we shall hear more of Vladimir Zhirinovsky yet. Personally, he has not the slightest doubt of that. In parting, he told me with his habitual aplomb: "Give me a billion dollars, and I shall become President of Russia."

Alexander Yanov

Photos by Victor Akhlonov and Alexei Kudenko

"Russia-Turkey. 500 Years" – Moscow Fair

A Russian-Turkish fair is under way in the Manege Exhibition Hall of Moscow. It is timed with the 500th anniversary since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

On display are not only consumer goods from 30 Turkish companies but also goods produced by Russian defence plants as a result of conversion. Over 60 enterprises in the military-industrial complex brought their products to Moscow. The items are not only expected to perk the curiosity of the general public. Most important for these enterprises, is to arouse interest among Turkish businessmen. Defence plants show their microplane, hospital equipment and high-precision machines. The main idea is to demonstrate that Russian enterprises have advanced technology. The hope is for Turkish businessmen to take an interest precisely in this technology.

Turkey, which more and more noticeably plays the part of a sub-regional power in Asia and Transcaucasia, has its doors open to advanced technologies both from the West and the East. It therefore appears that our countries are interested in each other today as never before. The fair is a concrete manifestation of this interest.

Photo by Alexei Kudenko

Not only drugs but also technology...

Today Russia has to import 30 to 40 percent of its drugs because they are not produced here. The situation is not likely to improve in the foreseeable future. Under the new Health Ministry's approach, the foreign companies willing to cooperate with Russia will get guaranteed orders for medicine to be immediately shipped to this country. As part of the deal, they will have to give Russia the know-how, some of the equipment to produce these drugs and train Russian personnel, i.e., organize production at Russian enterprises.

Now Russia will not only buy medicine but also get access to advanced technologies and techniques, providing a boost to the domestic industry. Moreover, as Russia adapts its raw materials to western technology, it will buy increasingly less of them for hard currency. Purchased in this manner, the drugs will be 1/2 as costly as imported ones.

Black Sea Rim cooperation becomes reality

Free movement of goods, capital, services and workforce is the basic objective of the Black Sea Rim Cooperation Association that was founded in January 1992 by Russian state and private commercial structures. It follows Turkish President Ozal's plan to form a Black Sea Rim Economic Cooperation region. A shared willingness to promote free entrepreneurship and mutually beneficial cooperation unites Russian, Ukrainian, Moldovian, Turkish, Bulgarian, Romanian and Greek business circles. The membership of the association is growing; most of its members are small- and medium-sized companies that have a stake in breaking into foreign markets and establishing direct ties with foreign partners. They receive all kinds of assistance, including aid for purchasing required equipment and goods, work on commercial projects and individual initiatives.

However, the association has other methods as well to improve business activity. Business seminars, meetings, fairs, etc., are organized for Russian and foreign business people. Foreign partners are helped to find investment opportunities, to analyze and carry out projects and proposals; they receive accurate economic and commercial information and consulting, legal, auditing and other services.

Promotion of private business is the goal of all the Association's work. It is open to any initiatives, to all those interested in a better life for the region and who are willing to participate in bold projects.

Canadians help remove Moscow's snow

The mayors of Montreal and Moscow have put their signatures on a programme for cooperation between the two cities from 1992 to 1994. The joint work envisages, in particular, Canadians helping Muscovites build a system of modern city management – meaning a fairly far-reaching measures, from snow and rubbish removal to modernization of the infrastructure, from privatization to the introduction of democratic administration methods.

The Montreal mayor's determination to cooperate with Moscow seems to have met full understanding on the part of the Moscow mayor, Yuri Luzhkov, who said that the scale of planned projects is startling and that Moscow is now one of the best places in the world for the investment of foreign capital. It is most of all the reconstruction of central Moscow, where a number of Canadian firms are already engaged. The building of hotels, offices and trade centres promises good profits for foreign partners. In Luzhkov's opinion, the stability of municipal authorities in Moscow is a favourable factor for foreign firms. At the same time, he advised foreign businessmen to show persistence and patience at the present stage, having in mind the red tape which entangles the city.

Siberians in Australia

The Australian company Pacific invited Siberian scientists to help prospect for oil in Australia.

The Siberian Geology, Geophysics and Mineral Resources Institute in the city of Novosibirsk reports that its staffers are now prospecting in north-eastern Australia. This work over, they will make proposals concerning sinking boreholes. The holes, it was said, would be sunk to a depth of 900 to 1,200 metres. The Institute's researchers earlier provided technical aid to prospect in Hungary, Bulgaria and Czecho-Slovakia.

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STATE TAXATION SERVICE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
March 20, 1992, No. 8

INSTRUCTIONS ON APPLICATION OF THE LAW OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION "ON INCOME TAX ON INDIVIDUALS"

Continued from Nos. 38-41

Section VI. DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF TAXATION OF INCOME DERIVED FROM SOURCES ON THE TERRITORY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION BY PERSONS NOT PERMANENTLY RESIDENT IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

62. Individuals not permanently resident in the Russian Federation shall not be subject to income tax other than tax on income drawn from sources in the Russian Federation.

Income received from sources in the Russian Federation shall be understood to mean any income paid by an enterprise, institution, organization or individual registered as entrepreneur or received as a result of exercise or receipt of the right to use property located on the territory of the Russian Federation. Such income shall include, in particular, income from any kind of work at enterprises, institutions and organizations and from performing-arts or sports activities, as well as from creation, performance or any other use of works of science, literature and art, remunerations for authors of discoveries, inventions and industrial prototypes, payments under licenses, income drawn as dividends or interest, income from entrepreneurial (commercial) activities and other similar incomes.

63. Tax on income specified in Sections II and III hereof shall be withheld in keeping with procedures laid down by the said Sections.

Tax on other income from sources in the Russian Federation, drawn by persons not permanently resident in the Russian Federation, shall be exacted from the source of payment at a rate of 20 percent, unless provided otherwise by the international treaties of the Russian Federation or the former USSR or by decisions taken on the basis of the principle of reciprocity.

The above procedures shall apply to deduction of tax by enterprises, institutions, organizations and individuals registered as entrepreneurs on payments to foreign individuals, including individuals of republics within the former USSR not permanently resident in the Russian Federation, for any goods and products delivered by the same, including produce and products from their subsidiary smallholdings.

Enterprises, institutions, organizations and individuals registered as entrepreneurs shall report such income and the amounts of tax deducted to the tax agencies in the area, where they are located, in accordance with the format specified in Attachment No. 4 hereto.

64. Should a person not permanently resident in the Russian Federation qualify for subtractions from the assessable income drawn from sources in the Russain Federation, such person shall submit to the tax agency for the place of location of the tax-withholding enterprise, institution, organization or individual registered as entrepreneur, an application in accordance with the format specified in Attachment No. 10 hereto. The application shall be completed in three copies and certified by duly authorized taxation agencies of the country of the applicant's permanent residence. Two copies shall then be submitted by the applicant to the tax agency for the place of his tax payment in the Russian Federation. After checking correspondence of the application to the provisions of the appropriate Agreement with the respective country, the tax agency shall make appropriate marks on both papers, hand one copy back to the applicant and return the amount specified in the application from the budget. The application shall be submitted within a year of the tax deduction. Applications filed after such deadline shall not be accepted for consideration.

65. If pursuant to the appropriate Agreement between the former USSR or the Russian Federation and the state of a person's permanent residence such person is entitled to full or partial tax exemption in the Russian Federation, he may submit an appropriate application in three copies in accordance with the format specified in Attachment No. 10 hereto. Two copies of the application shall be filed with the tax agency for the place of income payment in the Russian Federation. After checking correspondence of the application to the appropriate Agreement with the respective country, the tax agency shall make an appropriate mark on both papers and return them to the applicant. The same shall submit one copy to the enterprise, institution, organization or individual registered as entrepreneur that such person's income was gained in the Russian Federation. This shall be the grounds for the payer's full or partial exemption from tax in the Russian Federation.

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Section VII. DECLARATION OF THE YEAR'S AGGREGATE INCOME BY INDIVIDUALS AND TAX ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES FOR THE YEAR'S AGGREGATE INCOME

66. Income-drawing individuals, who are subject to taxation pursuant to Sections III and IV hereof, shall submit a declaration of income actually received by them, as well as expenditures sustained by them in connection with gaining of such income, to the tax agency in the area, where they have their permanent place of residence, no later than April in accordance with the format shown in Attachment No. 8 hereto.

Individuals shall be obligated to include in such declarations data about all income drawn by them in the course of a year, each source of income and the amounts of tax assessed and paid on such income.

Data on income received, the taxation of which is envisaged by Sections II, III, IV and V hereof, shall be reflected in the declarations separately.

Should, in the course of a year, individuals come to have sources of income specified in Section IV hereof, such individuals shall submit a declaration within five days of expiration of a month following the date of appearance of such source. The declaration shall specify the amount of income received by individuals during the first month of the activity and the amount of income expected until the end of the current year.

Should a source of income cease to exist before the end of the current year, a declaration shall be submitted within five days of its disappearance.

Individuals who have not had income in the current year other than that from performance of labour duties at their regular place of work (service, study) shall not submit declarations of income received during the year to tax agencies.

67. Individuals' aggregate taxable income received in a year shall be reduced by:

(a) the amount of the minimum monthly pay in the Russian Federation and the amount of expenses on the upkeep of children and dependents in amounts established by Itam 13 hereof;

(b) expenses directly connected with drawing of such income; and

(c) amounts remitted at the individuals' request for charity, as well as to enterprises, institutions and organizations in the fields of culture, education, public health and social welfare, which are funded out of the budget either fully or partially. Such subtractions from individuals' income shall be made if in the course of the year they have not been made at the source of the income.

68. A year's aggregate income specified in a declaration of income shall be taxed at the rates set forth in Item 20 hereof.

The difference between the assessed amount of income and the amounts of income remitted in the course of a year shall be paid by individuals or returned to the same by tax agencies no later than June 1 of the year following the one reported on, or, in case of reassessment during the year, within two months of submission of the declaration to the tax agency.

Section VIII. OBLIGATIONS OF INDIVIDUALS, ENTERPRISES, INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO CAUSE LAW TO BE OBSERVED

69. Individuals, the income of which shall be subject to taxation on the basis of declarations of income and expenditures shall be obligated:

(a) to keep records of income received thereby during a calendar year and their expenditures connected with extraction of such income; individuals not engaging in entrepreneurial activities shall keep records of income receipt in any form they prefer. Individuals drawing income from entrepreneurial activities shall be obligated to keep a book of income and expenditures in accordance with the following approximate form:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(the figures stand for: 1. – period reported on /day, week, month, year/; 2. – amount of goods produced /services provided/; 3. – expenditures involved in the manufacture of products /provision of services/; 4. – amount of marketed products /provided services/; 5. – average price of marketed products /provided services/; 6. – amount of revenue or income /rubles and kopecks/; 7. – net income /profit minus losses, rubles and kopecks/.)

Total for the year:

Individuals engaged in entrepreneurial activities in the social and cultural spheres shall be obligated, in addition to this, to enter the names and residential addresses of the clients, patients and students in the books.

Additions may also be made in the book of income and expenditures by agreement with the tax agency, if need be, with account taken of the specific features of these or other kinds of activity.

The book in the form of a note-book, pad, etc., shall be acquired by the individual himself. The tax agency shall number, lace up and affix a seal to the book.

The accuracy of keeping the book of income and expenditures shall be checked by tax agency officials during checks on the completeness and correctness of the data on income and expenditures indicated in declarations, as well as in checks on individuals' activities. In identification of assessable income the following kinds of expenditures shall be ignored and, consequently, not be subject to recording in the book of income and expenditures:

– those on the personal needs of the payer and his family members (on housing renovation, maintenance and lease, etc.), just as other expenses not involved in income extraction; and

– those on the payment of taxes, except VAT, dues and payments on insurance and fines.

Persons letting premises, apartments, structures, garages and hiring out motor vehicles and other movable and real estate shall record the amounts of lease payments for such property either in cash or in kind.

Income from leasing out of property in the ownership or possession of several persons shall be taken into account with respect to the person owning or possessing the leased property.

Expenses on heating and lighting leased premises shall not be taken into account among the expenditures recorded, unless such premises are detached.

Individuals receiving author's fees for creation, publication, performance and other uses of works of science, literature and art, as well as remunerations for discoveries, inventions and industrial prototypes, shall keep records of the amounts of such income received and amounts of tax deducted by the source of income in the current year, as well as records of expenditures connected with creation of this or that specific work, etc. The records shall include the indication of the specific place and date of remuneration payment.

Individuals drawing income, the extraction of which does not require any expenditures, shall keep records of only the amounts of such income and tax deducted from the same, indicating the month, in which such income was received, and the source of income.

Final data for the year concerning the records of income and expenditures connected in drawing the same, as well as the amounts of tax withheld on such income,

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shall be the grounds for completion by individuals of declarations of the year's aggregate income.

(b) to submit, in cases invisaged by the Law, declarations of income and expenditures to tax agencies in accordance with the format established hereby, as well as other requisite documents and information confirming the accuracy of the data included in the declarations;

(c) to provide enterprises, institutions, organizations, individuals registered as entrepreneurs, and tax agencies with documents certifying the right to subtractions from income and, in appropriate cases, also with other documents and certificates (a certificate confirming that one has a subsidiary smallholding or a certificate of the amounts of wage/salary paid and taxes deducted therefrom at the previous place of employment to be presented in getting hired by a new place of employment, etc.);

(d) to pay the payable amounts of tax towards the budget in full and on time; and

(e) to admit tax agency officials to premises and other places used to draw income.

70. Enterprises, institutions, organizations and individuals registered as entrepreneurs that have signed contracts to use individuals' labour shall be obligated:

(a) to assess, deduct and pay towards the budget the amounts of tax on the income of the individuals accurately and on time;

(b) to provide tax agencies on time with data on income paid by them to individuals in keeping with procedures established hereby; and

(c) to fulfil other duties envisaged by legislative acts.

71. In signing contracts and other deals, it shall be prohibited to make tax reservations therein, which would commit income-paying enterprises, institutions, organizations and individuals registered as entrepreneurs to bear expenses connected with payment of tax for individuals.

Section IX. DUTIES OF TAX AUTHORITIES

72. Tax authorities shall be obligated to carry out checks to verify whether income tax and appropriate deductions from the assessable income have been made correctly and whether the amounts withheld as tax have been remitted toward the budget in full and on time by all enterprises, institutions and organizations regardless of their organizational structure and legal form and also by individuals registered as entrepreneurs, that have signed contracts with individuals on the use of their labour. The order of priority of such checks shall be determined by heads of tax agencies. The correctness of tax assessment shall be checked at random, for which purpose the check shall cover selected personal accounts of employees, payrolls and other documents under which earnings (incomes) are paid out. Should material errors in tax assessment be uncovered, all personal accounts and other documents shall be checked.

73. Should the check uncover that tax-withholding enterprises, institutions, organizations and individuals registered as entrepreneurs breach legislation in the process of taxation, such enterprises, institutions, organizations and natural persons shall be subjected to a second check, the purpose of which shall be to verify their compliance with the suggestions made in the deed of the original check.

The list of tax-withholding enterprises, institutions, organizations and individuals registered as entrepreneurs to be subjected to a check in connection with tax assessment shall be approved by the heads of tax agencies. Such lists shall also indicate the specific timing of the proposed checks.

74. In checking whether the amounts withheld as tax have been remitted to the budget in full and on time, tax agency officials shall be obligated:

– to compare the accounting data showing the amounts of tax withheld (in accordance with the Account "Settlements with the Budget") with the total amounts actually collected as per the payrolls and other documents under which other incomes have been paid out. To find out whether all the documents have been presented for the check, the total amount of income calculated in accordance with those documents must be compared with the accounting data appearing in the following accounts: "Settlements with Personnel as Regards Remuneration of Labour," "Settlements with Personnel as Regards Other Operations," "Settlements with Various Debtors and Creditors," "Settlements with Accountable Persons" and the "Cash" Account. Payrolls should also be examined at random in order to verify the correctness of the total amount withheld as tax.

– to compare the available data indicating the amounts of tax paid into the budget with copies of payment orders stored on file at the accounting departments of enterprises, institutions and organizations, which orders request the remittance of the said amounts to the budget and which bear appropriate marks of banking institutions indicating that the same have been accepted for further action, and also with the accounting data showing the amounts of tax remitted to the budget.

Should discrepancies be uncovered between the records indicating the amounts of tax actually paid into budget and the corresponding accounting documents of enterprises, institutions and organizations (documents accompanying the Account "Settlements with the Budget"), it shall be necessary to compare such documents with the figures contained in payment orders which are stored at banking institutions and which request the latter to make payments into the budget.

75. The findings of a check shall be presented in the form of a deed essentially in accordance with the format specified in Attachment No. 11 hereto.

The amounts of tax that have not been remitted to the budget shall, with the addition of appropriate penalty, be exacted from tax-withholding organizations, institutions, and individuals registered as entrepreneurs without recourse to court.

Should the findings of a check reflect violations of any kind, the head of the tax agency concerned shall take appropriate measures to bring to account such persons as are guilty of the violations.

76. Tax authorities shall be obligated to ensure the accurate assessment and payment of tax by individuals whose incomes are subject to taxation by tax authorities. In doing so, they shall be guided by the directives set forth below.

77. Tax authorities shall levy income tax on payers on the basis of:

a) declarations of incomes and expenditures filed with tax authorities at times prescribed by the Law together with other documents and records confirming the authenticity of data appearing in the declarations, including the data entered into the book of incomes and related expenditures, which books the payers are required to keep;

b) data supplied to tax authorities by enterprises, institutions, organizations and natural persons indicating the amounts paid out to individuals;

c) findings of examinations by tax authorities of individuals' activities, and other available data on taxpayers' incomes.

Should individuals refuse to let tax agency officials to check on their activities, the officials shall be entitled to determine the taxable income of such individuals on the basis of documents indicating receipt of income thereby and shall do so with account

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of the taxation of persons engaged in similar activities.

78. Tax agency officials shall be obligated to ensure the timely filing by individuals of declarations of income, and shall thoroughly check the same with the use of the available data, as well as information provided by enterprises, institutions, organizations and individuals concerning incomes paid out to such individuals and concerning taxes levied thereon.

The check on the activities of individuals, whose incomes are subject to taxation, shall be conducted by tax agency officials at times determined by the head of the tax agency concerned.

Tax authorities shall be obligated to check on the activities of individuals who, in accordance with available information, are in receipt of incomes other than those paid for work at enterprises, institutions and organizations.

For the purpose of identifying individuals in receipt of incomes subject to taxation, tax authorities shall also conduct checks at places where such individuals sell products manufactured by them or provide their services.

79. In inspecting the activities of individuals engaged in entrepreneurship, tax agency officials shall examine the conditions of work, procurement of raw materials and sale of finished products, study the demand for products and services, determine the number of products manufactured and the amount of services provided, find out about the selling prices of products or the amount of pay for services, the existence of any stocks of finished products, the value of raw and other materials, as well as other expenses incurred in connection with such entrepreneurship.

The following control data shall also be used for inspection purposes:

a) information provided by relevant enterprises concerning the norms of consumption of raw and other materials in manufacturing products or providing services;

b) information provided by clients and other individuals concerning the prices of products and services, operating costs and so forth;

c) the findings of any previous checks;

d) information provided by enterprises, institutions and organizations concerning the amounts paid out to individuals for products (assets) purchased from them.

Tax agency officials shall compare the data provided by the payer with the control data and in the event of any conflict between them determine the causes of such conflict.

The payer's statements concerning his/her working hours and the amount of work performed shall at all times be checked by means of periodical visits to the place of the payer's work (at different hours of the working day), by questioning knowledgeable persons and by measuring stocks of finished products and existing orders.

Additional checks shall be periodically conducted to find out whether any members of the individual's family take part in his/her activity, to determine the selling price of products and the amount of pay for work. For this purpose tax agency officials shall question buyers, clients and so forth. The length of working hours at enterprises shall also be determined in respect of persons engaged in entrepreneurial activity in their free time.

80. If the check on taxpayers' activities reveals that the book of incomes and expenditures is kept incorrectly or that it does not accurately reflect all taxable incomes and related expenditures, the tax agency concerned shall be obligated to demand that the taxpayer make necessary changes in the book of incomes and expenditures. If the taxpayer fails to comply with such demands, the data recorded in the book of incomes and expenditures shall not be accepted and tax shall be assessed on the basis of the check's findings.

81. Proceeding from the findings of checks and inspections of individuals' activities, tax agency officials shall compile, in situ, a deed essentially in accordance with the format specified in Attachment No. 12 hereto.

The deed may not be written with a pencil. Any corrections made therein shall be confirmed by the signatures of the tax agency official and the individual whose activity is subjected to inspection. Any information about the output, number of products, amount of services, prices, consumption of raw and other materials, their value and inputs of time shall be specified in the deed in both figures and words.

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Should the taxpayer refuse to sign the deed, an appropriate mark shall be made therein.

Tax agency officials shall make relevant decisions on the basis of the deed of check or inspection.

Section X. TAXATION OF INDIVIDUALS MADE TO PAY TAX AT IMPROPER TIME AND THE REVISION OF THE INCORRECTLY DEDUCTED AMOUNTS OF TAX

Should individuals be made to pay tax at an improper time or should their income tax be improperly assessed, the appropriate amount of tax shall be either exacted from them or returned to them for no more than three years preceding the discovery of the improper deduction.

The amounts of tax not deducted as a result of a taxpayer's evasion of taxation shall be exacted for the entire time of tax evasion.

The amounts of tax not deducted fully or partially or not remitted towards the budget, which are subject to exaction from the source of payment, shall be exacted by the tax agency from enterprises, institutions and organizations, which have paid income to individuals, without recourse to court.

82. Should it be established that an enterprise, institution or organization has remitted amounts of tax for its employees, such sums shall be included in the year's taxable income of these individuals. Tax assessments in this case shall be done by the appropriate enterprise, institution or organization. The deducted tax shall be remitted in keeping with procedures established by Section II hereof.

Section XI. LIABILITY OF JURIDICAL PERSONS AND INDIVIDUALS FOR VIOLATING THE LAW AND APPEALS AGAINST ACTIONS BY TAX AGENCIES AND OFFICIALS THEREOF

83. Juridical persons and individuals shall be liable for violating the Law in keeping with procedures and on the terms and conditions envisaged by legislative acts.

84. Appeals against actions by tax agencies and officials thereof shall be based on procedures envisaged by legislative acts.

I.N. LAZAREV
Head, State Taxation Service
of the Russian Federation

S.V. GORBACHEV
"AGREED"
Russian Federation Deputy Minister
of Finance

As in business as in life

Olga Peterson is a study in the unexpected; her achievements at the Moscow office of Ernst & Young, one of the "big six" international auditing firms, as Information Technologies Director are no exception

A Russian Jew with a last name which is neither, a woman with a BS in Industrial Engineering and an MBA from the University of Chicago, having landed in "the land of opportunity" at the critical age of eighteen – America's dream immigrant made the most of what was available to her and then kicked up her heals and went home with it.

"People ask me if I consider myself American or Russian. I answer, I'm Immigrant. A good number of my friends are Immigrants."

She describes how as a fresh arrival to America she sat in the first row of an economics class. "I was shocked by how logical it all was. It was May and the other students were itching to get out and enjoy the sunshine, but I sat there totally enraptured."

Olga's passion has yet to wane. "Though I may not be a Rachmaninov, I still have a statement to make. My department is my statement."

Olga Peterson practicing her art

The "department" she refers to goes by the odd code of Scala. Such is the name of a bilingual, bi-cultural computer software package which by its description takes on proportions of "golden shoes" – making the treacherous path to Russia's fairy-tale capitalist future as easy as three wishes. Indeed on September 10 the software package, with training courses, was presented to the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry so that it can keep abreast of the technological advances utilized by Moscow's Joint Ventures.

Scala is an integrated business management and accounting system used by almost 10,000 companies in more than 55 countries, now translated into Russian as well as being tailored to the myriad of local specificities.

Olga Peterson with her staff of 30 performed the truly unexpected: the Russian version is adjusted to meet CIS taxation and legislation laws while at the same time being able to present the same accounting information in the standard Western format known as GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles). Seemingly miraculously it "translates" Soviet-style bookkeeping data into a language intelligible to Western shareholders and managers, while also handling the multi-currency requirements – thus being truly bi-cultural.

What does Olga Peterson have in mind when she talks about her "statement"? "One's business life is an extension of one's personal life... The most important thing America could offer me had to do with ethics."

Olga the person is Mrs. Peterson the businesswoman. On meeting I'm immediately impressed. In a decidedly grey-suit work environment she appears in fiery pink stockings in combination with a business suit whose floral print arrests the eyes with equally bold hues. I soon found that her business philosophy is equally forthright. Her "statement" is a straight-forward approach to conducting business, irregardless of a burgeoning Moscow business community not renown for this trait. "Just open up, it's more effective," she says.

Peterson is characteristically candid on her motives for being in Moscow at this historically pivotal moment. She describes two groups of people coming to Russia these days: those here as a career move with skills which are in high demand in Moscow, and those for whom Russia is a magnet forever tugging at their souls. Her membership in both categories is an unique advantage in the role as a bridge between two cultures.

It is easy to imagine the nightmares in store for foreign business people who expect Russia to be a version of their homeland. This expectation is the number one recipe for disaster according to Peterson.

In her article for Russian Petroleum Investor, entitled "Bridging the Financial Information Gap," she says: "Traditionally, Soviet state enterprises tended to see accounting as a low priority activity carried out for government monitoring purposes. Managers did not expect to use their accounts as a source of vital information. The needs of Western energy executives are quite different."

It's not, however, only on the books where expectations differ. "Here friendship is everything ... isn't it beautiful," Olga Peterson muses. But this endearing aspect of Russian culture can, on the other hand, be quite exasperating, she points out. If you're an American business person who's seeking the bottom line in a negotiation, while the Russian partner is more interested in the art of conversation and developing human trust, frustration is the natural result. Finding common ground between such seemingly divergent mindsets is what Scala, the accounting software package, and Olga Peterson, the businesswoman, are all about.

Grisha Ellenberg

The debts we owe

The current situation as regards reimbursement of the external debt of the CIS states has been tottering on the brink for several months now. Indeed, after the USSR's disintegration most republics simply don't want to pay their share of the arrears. Russia, for example, pays much less than she should according to the reimbursement timetable. She offers the simple explanation that she doesn't have any hard currency available. However, the West, which could accept an explanation of that order from a country in Central Africa, is reluctant to do that in case of our country. Indeed, this extremely rich country which has everything it needs to go forwards, is simply unable to pay ridiculously small sums according to international standards, to thus allay creditors and not undermine trust.

What we owe

Though all the world's countries owe something one another and the relevant statistics have long been published by creditors and debtors, with us the problem is still a dark secret and to all practical intents there are no data to indicate how matters actually stand in this respect.

From the many interviews given the media by VIPs, one may deduce that the ex-USSR's external debt totals roughly $71 billion, of which $56 billion-odd are long-term, and $14 billion-odd are short-term. In turn, both types of debts break down into categories of loans, bonds, supplier credits, import letters of credit, Vneshekonombank-guaranteed credits, arrears as regards import and chartering, etc.

The experience amassed by the developing countries who have chalked up debts in excess of $1,000 billion demonstrates that what is of importance is not so much the total sum as repayment over the current term. Historically, for us it is this year that the ex-Soviet republics should fork out upwards of $20 billion.

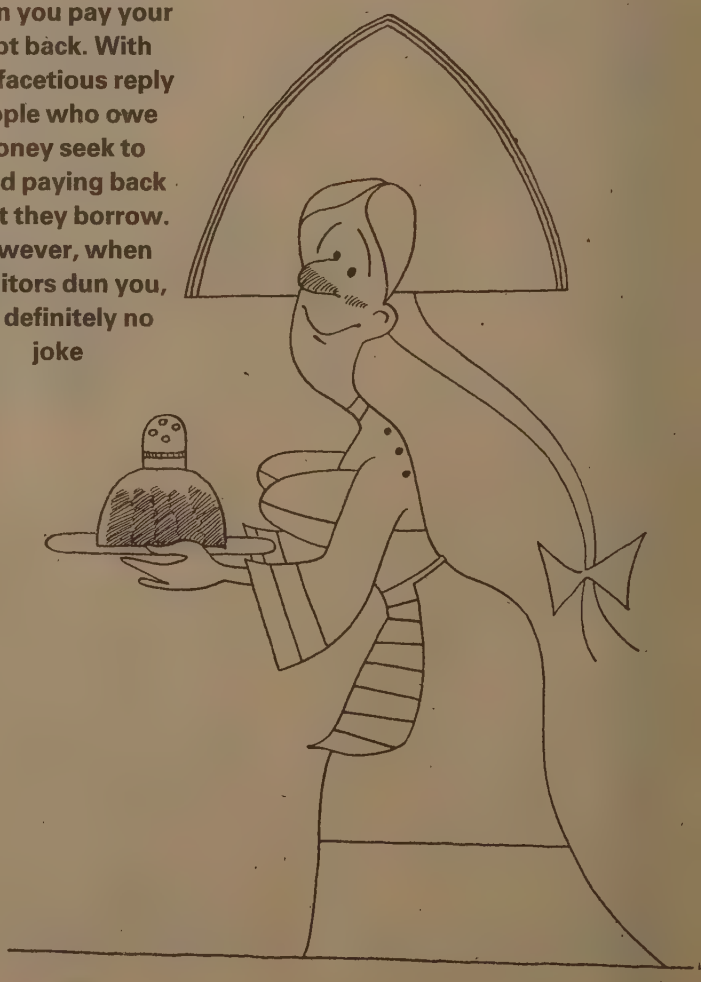
Yet since late 1991, Russia's government has been obliged to negotiate with representatives of creditor countries that are members of the so-called Paris and London clubs to defer reimbursement payments. Aware of our plight, they do that, but each time for not more than three months, upon the expiry of which the Russian government is compelled to again issue memoranda noting that hard currency situation is critical and that it simply cannot pay.

However, despite these deferments we nevertheless have to reimburse some $10 billion this year. Meanwhile the government alleges that it cannot pay more than $2.5 billion to $3 billion annually, as it does not have the money. It avers that were the West to furnish more credits not linked to some definite purpose, but usable to service the external debt, reimbursement prospects would be more encouraging.

The West is not very happy with this, the more so that in the view of creditors, Russia can fully reimburse her external debt. True enough, this year's exports, which to all practical intents are fully hard currency nowadays, total, even according to conservative estimates, some $30 billion. Further, in the view of international fiscal agencies, some exports, for which the countries of the "imemdiate abroad" pay rubles, could be currently rechanneled Westward, which would yield additional hard currency. A third source is the share of the unfrozen credits of the ex-USSR, which Russia is to get.

The ex-Soviet Union's largest creditors are Germany, Japan, Italy, France, the USA and some other Western countries. We also owe money to ex-Comecon countries, but in transferable rubles, Soviet rubles or clearing dollars. Oddly enough, we also owe, again on a clearing basis, money to some developing countries, such as Egypt, India, Iran, and Syria. These are all different types of debts and for each specific country we employ our own rate of

You borrow for a while but never see your money again when you pay your debt back. With that facetious reply people who owe money seek to avoid paying back what they borrow. However, when creditors dun you, it's definitely no joke

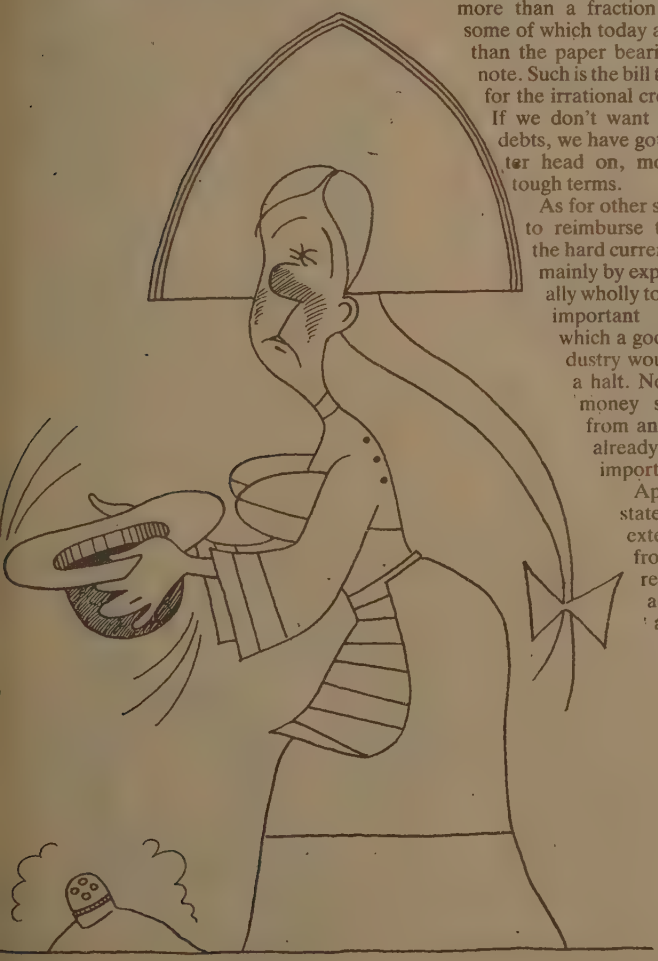


exchange in rubles and other currencies. Hence, all that these debts have in common is the need for us to reimburse them.

What we are owed

So where from are we to get the money? It is indeed true that some countries owe the ex-USSR. However, this debt is in rubles, with some 44 billion owed by the developing countries and 42 billion by the former socialist countries; consequently, it is impossible to figure out how much these sums amount to nowadays in dollars. Besides that, the very list of debtors provokes nothing but a condescending smile as it includes Cuba, North Korea, Mongolia, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Nicaragua. Theoretically, only India, Iraq, Libya, Syria and some other countries are in a position to pay up, but even then not the full sum in hard currency, but partly in goods that will certainly not help us to reimburse our external debt.

Admittedly, what the third countries owe us is nothing but a chain of phantom debts.



Drawing by Gennady Zhivutsky

Our strategy in this connection should evidently be to get at least something from them. The most sensible thing would be to convert these debts into property within the debtor country. It would also be a pretty good idea to acquire in tropical countries health resorts as well as land with mineral deposits or real estate that could subsequently be commercially exploited. Though the entire sum will not be forthcoming thus, at least part will be compensated.

Another option is to sell off these hopeless debts at a price lower than the nominal. They could be bought by agencies knowing how to pressure the specific debtor into paying up. Western banks could also accept as reimbursement political concessions generating a more conducive atmosphere for private investment. Of course, we must realize that we will never get much more than a fraction of these arrears, some of which today are worth even less than the paper bearing the promissory note. Such is the bill that we have to foot for the irrational crediting of the past. If we don't want to write off these debts, we have got to tackle the matter head on, moreover, in rather tough terms.

As for other sources enabling us to reimburse the external debt, the hard currency receipts gained mainly by export are spent virtually wholly to purchase critically important imports without which a goodly part of our industry would simply grind to a halt. Not infrequently the money still not obtained from an export contract is already spent to purchase imports.

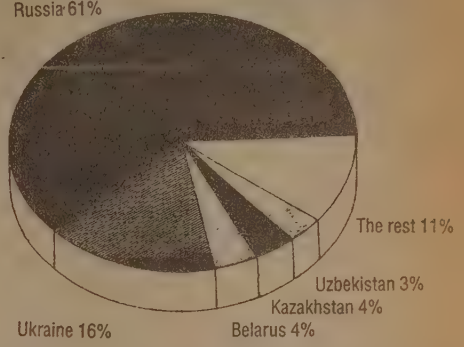
Apart from that, the state can reimburse the external debt only from hard currency reserves which nowadays total less than a tenth of the amount needed. Enterprises obligated to market about half of their hard currency intake, including contributions to centralized hard currency reserve, put their best foot forward to dodge that so as to hold on to their currency and use it at discretion.

Though the state is tightening the screw, is setting up sundry hard currency inspectorates and has obligated exporters, as of this October 1, to sell all their hard currency take in the domestic hard currency market, the hard currency rate of exchange is rocketing and the flight abroad of hard currency is intensifying to a point which according to some estimates is already in the neighbourhood of a monthly billion.

We do not mean to say that a Mr X or Mr Y is taking trunkloads of dollars out. What is done is that exporters open accounts in foreign banks, into which they deposit hard currency receipts under various pretexts. Government agencies find it impossible to collar this money, as no reputable bank will ever reveal customer deposits unless it receives an already operative court ruling recognizing this or that customer as a lawbreaker.

One obstacle to obtaining more money from our traditional creditors is afforded by the circumstance that in many countries the law forbids the government to loan money to failing unpunctual debtors. One can understand why as state credits are derived form the taxpayers' money, which the government must necessarily employ as efficiently as possible. If not for some earlier two-way credits, that were frozen after the mess the country fell into, there would be virtually no new receipts or they would be at best but symbolical. Neither has the loudly announced $24 billion aid, which everyone seems to have forgotten nowadays, gone any further than talk, while the announced

REPUBLIC-BY-REPUBLIC BREAKDOWN OF EX-USSR'S EXTERNAL DEBT



RISE IN EX-USSR'S EXTERNAL DEBT (in $ billions)

1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
31.4	39.2	43.0	54.5	61.1	61.4	71.1

IMF $1 billion credit is hedged by such strings that at the current juncture the government is simply afraid to accept it.

At the same time, the issue of responsibilities that the CIS countries bear for the ex-USSR's external debt remains. In late October 1991, the representatives of several CIS republics signed a memorandum expressing a reciprocated understanding as to the debts the USSR and its successors owe abroad; they announced that they shared a common responsibility for these debts and authorized Vneshekonombank to act as trustee.

Russia will have to pay

Signed in December 1991 was a treaty on succession to the ex-USSR's foreign debt and assets. With an eye to each republic's share in export-import, its population and its portion of the ex-USSR's national income, it was resolved that Russia should get 61.34 percent of these debts and assets and the Ukraine, Belarus, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, respectively, 16.37, 4.13, 3.27 and 3.86 percent. As for the other republics, they would each be responsible for under 2 percent. All the republics were obliged to open special accounts in Vneshekonombank, from which they were to withdraw the money to reimburse their part of the external debt.

Finally, last March the CIS republics signed an agreement amending the aforesaid treaty and appointing Russia and the Ukraine as two of the three co-chairmen of an interstate council whose third co-chairman is to be appointed by rota from among the other members.

The republics party to these documents were basically interested not so much in honouring their external obligations and accordingly hoping for fresh credits, as in getting part of the ex-USSR's assets. However, all that the creditors wanted was for one of the republics to reimburse the debts on behalf of all the republics. They shivered faced with the prospect of demanding arrears from each republic, as now and again it was impossible to put a call through to its respective officials.

However, the system drafted to reimburse the external debt has failed to operate, for the same simple reason as before, which is that most of the republics just don't have the hard currency. Although the hard currency resources of enterprises in several republics, who still maintain Vneshekonombank accounts, are sequestered to reimburse the common debt, Russia definitely honours no less than 95 percent of the total. Thus, though she could pay for the Central Asian republics, who account for a negligible portion of the debts and assets, the bitter pill she is obliged to swallow is that the Ukraine is not contributing.

Faced with this situation, the Russian government has proposed accepting full responsibility for servicing the external debt, provided it gets all the ex-USSR's assets. Belarus, Kyrghyzstan and Turkmenistan were only too delighted to sign this "zero option" agreement. The Baltic republics do not recognize the problem, as they never considered themselves part of the USSR. Meanwhile the Transcaucasian republics are warring against one another and cannot consider the matter at present.

The Ukraine presents a special headache. Though it is not contributing as it should to reimbursement, it nevertheless wants to have its part of the assets in the belief that they are quite sizeable. Russia's government thinks it will have to sign a long-term agreement with the Ukraine, under which the ex-USSR's assets due to Ukraine would be granted as it reimbursed its debt to Russia arising out of the latter's payment of the Ukrainian share of the external debt. This agreement would be profitable for the Ukraine, as it is fully relieving it of external debts and hence enabling it to seek fresh credit. Meanwhile Russia would have free room for manoeuvre and could decide at discretion every aspect of debt servicing.

Whatever the relations with the other CIS countries may develop into, it is obvious today that despite the principle of common accountability, it is up to Russia to reimburse the ex-USSR's external debt. To that end, it is vital to concentrate on the effort to cope with domestic issues, at the outset at least to draft a balance of payments that would incorporate Russia's trade with the other CIS countries to thus see what would eventualize were she to switch to world prices or to rechannel Westward part of her export. I personally think this option offers substantial amount of hard currency resources.

Apart from that, it is essential to revert to a policy of financial stability by making the ruble the sole lawful means of payment at home and exclude foreign hard currency from the domestic turnover. Economic regulation should be ordered so as to make it advantageous to bring foreign hard currency to the country and exchange such currency for rubles.

Finally, we must evolve a comprehensive crediting strategy to secure the most efficient application of attracted foreign credit and also draw up a comparative analysis of loan terms and guaranteed debt payments. We must realize that here we need a succinct, concise policy that both Western creditors and our own enterpreneurs could understand.

Nina Plekina

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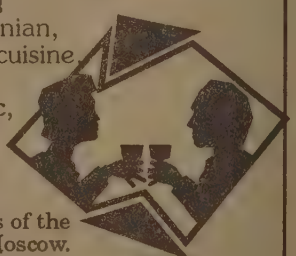

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The Kuril barrier

The political blunder was made not in September but much earlier

The decision to postpone President Yeltsin's visit to Japan goes to show that Russian diplomacy has failed to clear the Kuril barrier at the first try. It looks as if the form of this decision has been selected on purpose so as to hurt the Japanese badly. The whole thing is that no official explanations (which, incidentally, contradict one another now and again) cannot eliminate the impression, absolutely predominant in this country and abroad, that Yeltsin has given in, more obviously than ever, to pressure from the right, and from now this pressure will keep mounting all along the line.

There is no denying that the Japanese side has overdone it as far as the "Northern territories" issue is concerned, and tried too frankly to take advantage of the weakness of Russia's position today. But it is also true that Tokyo's stand was clear and perfectly predictable since early this year when preparations for the summit began. No changes were made in it last September. The last-minute cancellation of the visit was a diplomatic blunder which only added to the record of the political errors committed much earlier. The summit could have been planned at all if there had been proposals acceptable to Moscow and promising a breakthrough in its relationships with Tokyo.

On the eve of the visit many were amazed to learn that the President had fourteen alternative solutions to the problem. After all, big-time politics is no bingo. It presupposes just one well-thought-out plan taking the national interests of all the parties concerned into account, a plan which the government ought to steadily go ahead with in spite of internal and external obstacles. As a matter of fact, the issue was made into a ball in a domestic political game — a ball which finally landed in our own goal.

The Sinai example

The Russian leadership announced that the Southern Kuril problem was to be solved on the principles of "legality and fairness." This formula sounded just fine in the President's declaration. Nevertheless, it contributes nothing towards a practical approach to a settlement of the Russian-Japanese dispute. The rich historical experience of Europe, Asia, the Middle East and now of the CIS shows that major territorial disputes are never settled that way.

The best method of blocking the solution of the problem is to carry on the argument over who was the first to set foot on the islands centuries ago, and how the past treaties ought to be interpreted.

Instead, things ought to be called their proper names. Since the moment of our Army's 87th Infantry Corps landing on Iturup and Kunashir in August 1945, the islands have been owned by the Soviet Union and then by Russia as its legal successor. The fundamental redrawing of the borders as a result of World War II was sealed by relevant international agreements — except in the case of the Southern Kurils.

Had it not been for the Cold War, the USSR's claims to the islands would probably have been recognized in accordance with the Yalta commitments made by the allies in the anti-Hitler coalition in 1945. But for the imperial cretinism of Stalin who refused to join the US in signing the San Francisco Treaty of Peace with Japan in 1951, the case of the Southern Kurils would probably have been settled in exactly such a manner.

Let us face it, though — this would not have solved the problem. Japan would never have resigned itself to the loss of the four islands — and this is a political reality no historical and legal arguments can call off. Let us recall in this connection that the GDR's status was guaranteed by all sorts of treaties and declarations which did not prevent the reality of German unity from prevailing in the end.

As all know, the subjunctive mood is not applicable to history. Tokyo's arguments in the territorial issue are by no means airtight. Besides, Tokyo makes normal relations between the two countries conditional on the return of the four islands.

Indeed, Russia owns the islands as a result of their seizure in 1945. There is nothing extraordinary about that. The United States, many European countries, and Japan itself have repeatedly acquired new territories in wars. At the same time, history abounds in examples of various powers deliberately sacrificing certain territories for the sake of economic, political and strategic advantages. In

After the war, Stalin sought maximum expansion into the Far East. Roosevelt had no objections to that

Throughout the past fifty years Moscow has not taken much care of the Kuril residents

such cases they had to put up with a loss because no country has any superfluous territories it can very well do without. The important thing is that gains should outweigh losses.

This is well illustrated by the Camp David accords under which Israel returned Sinai – which it had conquered in the six-day way of 1967 – to Egypt. It is only too obvious that in its relative size and geostrategic importance, Sinai Peninsula means much more to Israel than the Southern Kurils do to Russia. Besides, the return set a much more serious precedent, considering that Israel had also seized the Golan heights and the Western bank of the Jordan River. Therefore, the domestic opposition to the accords was extremely strong. At the same time, few will deny today that as a result of Camp David Israel strengthened its security considerably, split its enemies and converted some of them into its friends, gained more freedom in dealing with the rest of the problems.

The military and commercial fishing

The economic aspect of the problem is strongly distorted by those who are for and against handing the islands over to Japan. It is hardly likely that if Russia relinquishes the islands, Japan will lavish credits and investments on it which will propel Siberia and the Far East into prosperity. The financial, economic, legal and administrative situation in this country is the least favourable for Japanese big business. (Incidentally, this has already discouraged Japanese businessmen's Korean colleagues who were not hindered by any territorial disputes.)

In this context, linking up the return of the islands to Japan with the latter's economic aid (the most frequently used argument in favour of concession) means compromising Russia's foreign policy and the idea of economic cooperation with the world's leading industrialized countries. Given more radical reforms in Russia, financial stability, and every encouragement of foreign investments in spheres where they would benefit Russia the most, Japanese big business will be prepared to cooperate with us anyway (as indicated by its willingness to take part in the oil extraction project on the Sakhalin shelf). It is then that normalization of interstate relations, including territorial delimitation, will become really crucial to the rise of Russia's trans-Urals region.

Without Japan – the world's leading exporter of capital – it is impossible to create a modern market infrastructure in the Far East. Without it, no major deals will be made with South Korea, Taiwan, Hongkong and Singapore. By the way, no prosperous state in the region (the US included) did without large Japanese investments.

On the other hand, it is difficult to take seriously arguments to the effect that if we give up the Southern Kurils, we shall lose their mineral and fish resources. Our utilization of these resources is beneath criticism. The USSR had almost half a century to make full use of them; instead, it concentrated on building military bases and installations there. The local people are deprived of the blessings of modern civilization, live among huge garbage heaps; working conditions at the fish canneries are appalling and, what's more, the islands are cut off from the mainland (the authors know this from experience). Adequate use of the islands' economic potential and offshore fish resources is impossible without radical reforms in Russia and Japanese investments.

The cancellation of the September visit is a serious lesson to Japan, too. On its part, the straightforward linkage of economic aid with the territorial dispute is an insult to Russia. After what has happened over the past few years, our country's vulnerability make concessions more difficult rather than easier.

The military regards the islands as an important bridgehead

The APR: a shift of emphasis

We often underrate the political aspect of the problem as "immaterial." Normalization of political relations with Japan is treated in the spirit of the notorious "new political thinking" which has long been setting everybody's teeth on edge. Actually, the political aspect of the Southern Kuril issue matters most, not from the viewpoint of lofty ideas and ideals, but in the context of Russia's realistic national interests, and pragmatic aims.

The geopolitical alignment of forces in the Asian Pacific Region (APR) is now changing rapidly. Until a few years ago, the world's three biggest powers – the US, Japan and China – opposed their common enemy, the USSR, there in what was a military-political confrontation. At the turn of the nineties, Moscow achieved an improvement of relations with Washington, Beijing and Seoul, thus splitting the coalition. The former USSR's armed forces in the Far East have been reduced, their bases and activity abroad have been curtailed substantially. The US military presence and influence in the Western Pacific are also diminishing steadily.

On the other hand, China is showing an unprecedented economic growth rate (10 percent this year), and is to conduct a more active foreign policy. It is improving its war machine (making big arms purchases from Russia as part of this effort). Japan is getting rid of its post-war guilt complex and is beginning to play an independent political role in Asia. Its armed forces are relatively small, but the potential for their buildup – given a political impulse – is enormous indeed.

Patriotism – a new profession in Russia?

The "Four Little Tigers" and the ASEAN countries (which Indochina is gravitating to) are integrating fast. The process of reunification (probably an explosive one) is inevitable on the Korean Peninsula. There is a strong likelihood of conflicts over the oil shelf and communication routes in the South China Sea, of struggle for a redivision of the sphere of economic and political influence in the APR.

Russia has got rid of the burdensome and aggressive clients like the PDRK and Vietnam, the fears of Soviet "hegemonism" in Asia has been dispelled. Having become an actually neutral state, Russia, with its inexhaustible natural resources and its still considerable military might, has come close, in the APR, to a unique position – a geopolitical ideal of the 19th century: although in the throes of an economic crisis Russia may, if it plays its diplomatic cards right, become a cornerstone of the region's collective security system ensuring a stable balance of forces, a peaceful settlement of conflicts and economic co-prosperity. History knows of many examples of great powers successfully resorting to this classical balance of forces policy in the periods of their weakening or when confronted by strong new rivals.

Moscow is prevented from assuming this position by the fact that its relations with Japan are at an impasse, which handicaps Russian diplomacy and offers all the other states of the region one-sided advantages in their relations with Moscow. Without Japan, collective security in the APR is unthinkable. It should be borne in mind that Tokyo has also got more freedom of choice and is by no means short of recepients of its investments and credits. These now include Kazakhstan, Ukraine and other CIS countries. The law of the multipolar system of relations consists in that all the countries concerned seek to pursue a balance of forces policy; those who have not understood the new rules of the game and cannot settle old conflicts and discard old cliches are bound to lose.

The conservation of this impasse makes Russia's outlook for the future bleak. At best, it will find itself isolated from regional affairs and hopelessly lagging behind the turbulent processes of economic integration in the key region of the 21st century. At worst, it may change places with the "junior partner" of the fifties, China, and become dependent on it.

(To be concluded)

Alexei Arbatov,
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Photos reproduced from Time and Newsweek (US) and Der Spiegel (Germany)

Plainclothes psychiatrists

ready to defend their honour

In mid-September, the hearings on the case filed by the administration of the Oryol city mental hospital continued in the city of Oryol. The case against the newspaper *Sovetsky Sport* is quite out of the ordinary.

In February 1991, Gennady Mayorov, a *Sovetsky Sport* correspondent, wrote an article called "The secrets of the Oryol madhouse." The piece was based on information supplied by Vyacheslav Soldatov, a former sportsman who had worked at the Oryol Special Mental Hospital for 8 years. I will cite only one quotation from Soldatov's memoir:

"Later I saw political inmates... As a rule, they were well-educated people with progressive convictions. They tried to turn them into beasts... The conditions under which they were confined were horrendous. It was believed that other mental houses couldn't compare with ours. Usually 'slowly progressing schizophrenia' was the diagnosis given to political inmates. Everything was done in order to kill them. Their daily routine was as follows: they got up in the morning, took their breakfast and tranquillizers, then came injections, dinner, again tranquillizers... Evenings were the worst, injections before going to sleep. No live spot remained on them, indurations all over the body. The needles were poorly disinfected, which caused abscesses. The boils were not allowed to heal and immediately injected again..."

The administration of the Oryol mental hospital had kept silent for about a year, but finally lodged a complaint to defend its honour and dignity. Last August the first hearing took place at which the main plaintiff, the head physician, Lt. Colonel of Internal Troops, Tatiana Kotova, took the floor. She categorically refuted the content of the above-mentioned article, except for the truly irrefutable fact: that criminals were employed as hospital attendants. As for the rest, Tatiana Kotova demonstrated in her testimonial her absolute confidence in the justice and inviolability of the principles of Soviet psychiatry. In the opinion of Mrs Kotova, all prisoners of the Oryol mental hospital, including dissidents, were insane and needed treatment. Thus, even today the head physician Kotova has no doubts that all those who were found guilty under articles 70 and 190, part 1, of the Penal Code, and who were **recommended** for special treatment were insane. Nor has she any doubts about the necessity to open and inspect the letters of inmates and to make unbearably painful injections "as a punishment" in the case of "incorrect behaviour."

The Oryol Special Mental Hospital has existed since 1970. Many political prisoners have been kept there during these years: Solovyov, Tystsevich, Derevyankin, Lupinos, Komogorov, Pinyayev, Titov and others. In mid-September, four political prisoners of the Oryol insane asylum gave their affidavits in court: the Kaluga engineer Sergei Mikhailov, electrician Valery Sidorov from the city of Plavsk in Tula Region, chairman of the Conservative Party, Lev Ubozhko, and journalist Vladimir Gershuni. The latter was one of the first to be brought to the asylum, and he spent more than three years there. In 1971, he managed to hand over his notes about the methods, tortures, atrocities and general occurrences at the institution. His notes were the main documental evidence, based on which Amnesty International came to its conclusions about the use of medical means for torture in the USSR. Vladimir Gershuni described a certain Artyomov, 24, who implored the "doctors" to stop torturing him and who finally hanged himself on the back of his cot, using his towel as a rope. Afterwards these towels were taken away from all inmates and were issued to them only for washing in the morning. He also told the court how a drunken warden knocked out his teeth while the ward attendants held him by his hands...

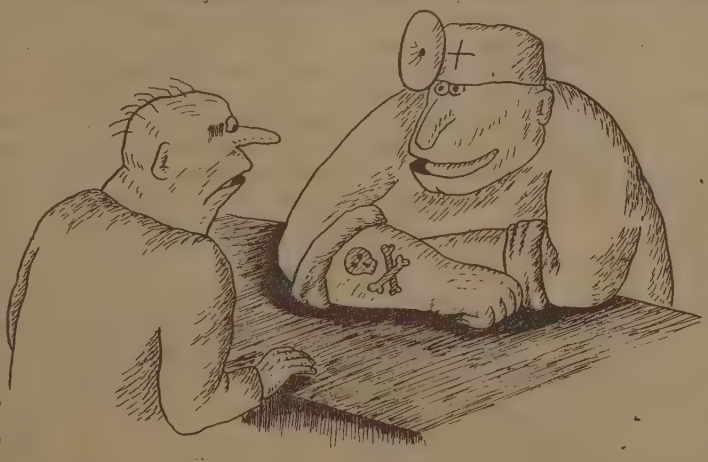
Has anything changed at the Oryol mental hospital today? There seem to be no political prisoners there now, and the hospital itself no longer holds a special status. Yet it is still headed by the same person. One example illustrates the current situation there: Vera Yeltsova, whose 25-year-old son is kept in the hospital, recently told the court that the "physicians" suggested that she should convince her son to admit his insanity and to recognize that the tortures called "treatment" were necessary for his convalescence.

I asked the well-known human rights defender and once a political prisoner who spent 15 years in jail, Vladimir Gershuni, to comment on the suit lodged by the administration of the Oryol mental hospital concerning the protection of honour and dignity.

"It was rather foolish of them," he said. "These 'doctors' are better off quietly sitting and waiting till everything is finally forgotten. However, neither I nor any of my friends have forgotten anything."

Right after the latest court hearings were adjourned, an international conference on "Compulsory treatment of mental patients who have committed social offences" was opened. Naturally, the Oryol psychiatrists attended this conference, wearing plain clothes. No one among the conference participants regarded it to be against their personal ethics to discuss psychiatric problems together with those who have been in close collaboration with the infamous Fifth Directorate of the KGB.

Mark Deutsch



Drawing by Marat Tairov

"Look into these inspired faces"

The idea of collecting these profiles belongs to Gennady Zyuganov. "Look into the inspired faces of Sergei Baburin, Albert Makashov, Alexander Lebed, Alexander Prokhanov and Victor Anpilov," he wrote recently in the newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya*. "Don't you see that they are men with statesman-like judgement and pure thoughts?" We respond to the appeal adding to this collection a profile of Zyuganov himself

Sergei Baburin was elected a people's deputy of Russia with the support of the Democratic Russia bloc. Today he is the most attractive and charismatic leader of those who are called "red-brown" (by association with Communist and Nazi ideas).

Baburin still considers himself a Communist and believes that he lives in the Soviet Union. Shortly before the USSR ceased to exist he stated that its future is possible only on a federal basis with a strong central government. Some time later, at a scandalous party organized by the newspaper *Den* (Day) in the Central Writers' Club, he said that "the Union has been destroyed not only by the presidents who signed documents in Byelorussia but also by deputies." At the same party he described President Yeltsin as a criminal, drawing prolonged and stormy applause by the guests.

Baburin's appearance in the Central Writers' Club was not accidental. He has a liking for writers, a trait he shares with all past General Secretaries of the party. But unlike General Secretaries, who invited "engineers of human souls" to the Kremlin, Baburin meets with them in their club, probably because he is not yet General Secretary, and not even Chairman of Parliament. He likes writers, not all of them, of course, but those who are "genuinely" Russian. Baburin is an associate editor of the newspaper *Den*.

Baburin has picked up something from his close association with writers. In using metaphors he can vie with writer Yuri Bondarev. For instance, he compared the Congress of People's Deputies of Russia held last spring with "the battle of Borodino in which there will be no victors." He predicted that "there will probably be a fire in Moscow this summer and Napoleon will run away in autumn." He freely uses metaphors relating to heroes and events from not only this century but the last one. At the height of "the battle of Borodino," that is, the Congress of People's Deputies, Baburin said that "Kerensky has already gone" (it should be supposed he ran away, and in a woman's dress, of course). Quite recently, replying to a journalist who asked what is in store for us, he responded: "Russia is on the eve of another October revolution."

■ ■ ■

In addition to "inspired faces," many leaders of the spiritual opposition have pompous titles. For instance, **Albert Makashov,** a retired general, is Chairman of the mysterious organization called the Council of Popular Assembly. He is also a lifelong people's deputy of the USSR.

We have always had many generals, especially in the Brezhnev period, but there is only one general like Makashov. He was "discovered" at the founding congress of the Russian Communist Party in June 1990. He was the one who made the most strongly-worded speech criticial of Gorbachev. Makashov accused the General Secretary of "handing over Eastern Europe" to the enemy. In subsequent years the general has remained involved in politics, becoming one of the staunch orthodox Communists and champions of a strong power.

Gen. Makashov ran for President of Russia, but his election programme was not convincing. He was unable to offer anything but quite understandable and even forgivable emotions and offences. Makashov favours rather peculiar methods to revive Russia. For instance, he considers public flogging a wonderful educational measure.

Together with his associates, Makashov doggedly refuses to recognize the break-up of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR. He was one of the organizers of "the sixth (special) Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR" held in the village of Voronovo by candlelight. Since his resignation Makashov has been appearing at various meetings. Special mention should be made of his visit to the Dniester Republic in Moldova. The general, however, quickly made an about face from the region. Apparently his services were not required there.

■ ■ ■

Alexander Lebed, 42, is the most paradoxical general of the former Soviet and now Russian army. His high-sounding name (the word *lebed* means swan) became known to the world in August 1991. It is part of the mythology surrounding the three days coup.

"Gen. Lebed's paratroopers stood in defence of the White House (the Russian parliament's building). They remained loyal to the lawful President of Russia," newspapers wrote in those days.

True, news leaked out later that Lebed first came to the White House with quite a different purpose: to warn the Russian government that in the event he receives the order he will take the White House by storm without hesitation. An order was not given.

As a result of a new alignment of forces another order was issued, and Lebed turned out a defender of the Russian President.

In the spring of this year, Major-General Lebed was appointed commander of the 14th Russian Army stationed in the Dniester Republic. His first press conference there

was interpreted in Kishinev as a prelude to war. Defence Minister Grachev had to intervene. Lebed was "advised" to refrain from political demarches. But the scolding Lebed received from the minister, with whom he served in Afghanistan incidentally, did not delay his promotion to the rank of Lieutenant-General.

In his speech at a session of the Russian parliament Alexander Lebed insisted that the high officers of the 14th Army should take part in negotiations with Moldova. Simultaneously, he pointed to the need to prepare for a possible resumption of hostilities. He lashed out at the Tiraspol leaders for the embezzlement of 24 million rubles which had been allocated for setting up a television service in the Dniester Republic. Lebed attacked newspapers on both banks of the Dniester for reports that the 14th Army officers were secretly selling military property. The general called for a court examination into the matter.

■ ■ ■

"A nightingale of the General Staff" and "a minstrel of the Afghan war." These titles have stuck to **Alexander Prokhanov** over many years. Some time ago he became editor-in-chief of *Den*, "the newspaper of the spiritual opposition." Prokhanov calls himself "a traditional imperialist" and "an advocate of a unitary state."

Prokhanov is a bold man, even for our times. In an interview to the magazine *Strana i mir* (The Land and the World) last spring he dared to say he would welcome fascism if the latter were needed for restoring order. The programmes of Mussolini and Pinochet suit him quite well as examples for imitation.

Prokhanov is fond of the military, especially marshals (such as Yazov, not Shaposhnikov) and generals (such as Filatov, Makashov, Sterligov and Varennikov). He also likes writers – members of the *Den* editorial board, by a lucky coincidence for him, and some of the journalists – members of the same editorial board. But he hates all other writers and journalists and also some

politicians. The newspaper *Den*, edited by Prokhanov, particularly berates Mikhail Gorbachev and Alexander Yakovlev.

Prokhanov and his newspaper are very fond of the imprisoned coup leaders and everything connected with them: their health, wives and life. If the State Emergency Committee (putschists) had won, Prokhanov believes, production would not have stopped and their economists would have established general order. The people ideologically close to Alexander Prokhanov think he is to the emergency-rule clique that Alexander Pushkin was to the Decembrists. Both are Alexanders which allowed writer Daniil Danin to note with good reason in *Literaturnaya Gazeta:* "Well, like Alexanders, like Decembrists."

■ ■ ■

We have had many occasions to look into the "inspired face" of

Victor Anpilov, for he is the organizer of most scandalous mass actions held by the Working Russia organization and the Russian Communist Workers' Party where he is chairman.

All actions organized by Anpilov have had one intention – to provoke the authorities into using violence. This would whip up anti-government hysteria and represent neo-Communists as victims of the "brutal" democratic regime or, as Anpilov likes to call it, "Yeltsin's occupation regime."

The latest action organized by Anpilov was a rally outside the Ostankino TV centre in Moscow. During this rally, of a protracted nature, the crowd became quite aggressive, attacking policemen and spitting in the faces of women employees of the centre. This probably accorded with the aesthetic and ideological principles of former radio journalist Anpilov.

Some time ago Anpilov's colleagues working together with him in Nicaragua accused him of provoking his chief into making anti-Soviet remarks, recording them on tape and passing them to the "appropriate bodies."

■ ■ ■

Gennady Zyuganov has always been a genuine Communist and patriot, though perhaps more of a Communist. He climbed the glorious road from a party instructor to Deputy Head of a department. In the years of *perestroika* he was Deputy Head of the Ideological Department of the Party's Central Committee. In this capacity he always had the attentive ear of superiors and was known by Politburo members. He could easily become Head of the Department or take on a higher post, because the system of selection and placing of personnel was elaborated in the Central Committee in detail. But in the time of Gorbachev the glorious position of a Central Committee official began to fade and devalue. The career was stalled and the authority was waning.

No wonder that Zyuganov does not have a tender affection for Alexander Yakovlev, his former party boss and simultaneously the ar-

chitect of *perestroika*. He has become known to the public owing to his sharp articles against Yakovlev.

Gennady Zyuganov was one of the founders of the Russian Communist Party, because only in that party could a minor official of the Central Committee realize his dream of becoming a Politburo member. Indeed Zyuganov was elected to the Politburo of the Russian Communist Party.

However, the RCP was associated with the most reactionary orthodox Communist forces in Russia and most Russian Communists refused to join it, repeating: "I am a member of the CPSU, not the RCP." An attempt to stage a coup was made in August 1991, and the secretariat of the RCP welcomed it in an official statement. Some time later President Yeltsin banned the party.

Today Zyuganov is more a patriot than a Communist. He is co-chairman of the Council of the Russian National Assembly.

Svetlana Alliluyeva without anyone to write letters to

Stalin's daughter living on British charity

On a regular drizzly day Lana Peters went out of her small flat in Ladbroke Grove in the west of London. She clutched the light-coloured teenagerish bag hanging on her shoulder and made her way to a bus stop.

Mrs Peters was going to an old thrift shop in Westbourne Grove. Among pictures and funny statuettes from the distant past, beside pieces of furniture which reminded of her happy childhood when she was not Lana Peters but Svetlanka, "little mistress of the house" and "little sparrow," she was able to tear herself away from the frightening void of recent years.

Lana Peters appeared in 1982 London with her daughter Olga and a large sum of dollars received from the publication of her books. She was happy to find a good flat in a prestigious district and to give her daughter a "decent English education."

Lana met a wonderful man, Malcolm Margridge, who showed much concern in her life. It seemed she would soon be able to break with her past forever and become simply Lana Peters never recalling that she is Svetlana Alliluyeva-Stalin.

Aid in a time of misfortune

But Lana Peters' cherished dreams didn't come true. Her good relations with Margridge took a bad turn in spite of the efforts of the old intellectual to preserve them. The savings dwindled, and she was compelled to sell her flat and move into a smaller one. At one moment it seemed she had found one more friend with whom she prepared several broadcasts for the BBC Russian Service. Boris Nechayev, who conducted the *Desert Island* programme, became another "safety-valve" for Lana Peters. But she also quarrelled with him, allegedly over trifles, and since then has been friendless.

Her daughter Olga remained the sole comfort for her. However, Lana Peters found it increasingly difficult to live with Olga, especially after the rash decision to return to Moscow, where everything was strange and alien to her daughter. Eventually, Olga, who was born in the United States, married an American and took off.

Under British law Mrs Peters was in the category of people who are in need of social aid. Abandoned by her daughter, without means of subsistence, she didn't have to wait long for a decision by the municipal council of the Kensington and Chelsea borough. Lana was given the opportunity to settle in a small flat kept by the Carr Gomm Charity Organization which aids lonely people.

Stalin's beloved daughter

Svetlana Alliluyeva was born on February 28, 1925. It was the year of the first major quarrel between Stalin and her mother, Nadezhda, who after that quarrel took her children and their two nurses and went to her father in Leningrad.

Stalin was not going to let the situation be. He phoned his wife with the information that he would come to Leningrad and take her and the children back to the Kremlin. Alliluyeva replied: "We shall come ourselves. Your trip will cost the state dearly." Such was her way of hinting at the source of her quarrels with Stalin.

Svetlana Alliluyeva recalled later that their conflict lay in the question to what extent "leaders" should live at the expense of the state.

Nadezhda Alliluyeva found it increasingly hard to tolerate the crude behaviour of her husband. She became hysterical and high-strung. Recalling why her mother committed suicide, Svetlana described the following incident at a banquet on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the revolution. Stalin addressed his wife: "Hey, you their! Drink up!" Alliluyeva got angry and jumped up. "You have no right to treat me like this," she cried, and ran out of the hall. At night she shot herself in the temple from a small, almost toy Browning presented to her by her brother Pavel.

1977. Svetlana Alliluyeva returns with her daughter to Moscow only to leave soon for the West again
Photo from the Time magazine

The meeting between Svetlana, then a 16-year-old schoolgirl, and Alexei Kapler, 40, a famous Soviet script writer, can apparently be considered the beginning of the story which finally led Alliluyeva to Ladbroke Grove. For the first time she dared to do what Stalin did not like. Kapler was sent to a prison camp.

The wild Gipsy blood of Alliluyeva's grandmother may have been behind Svetlana's desperate and contradictory actions. She married Grigory Morozov, gave birth to a son, and divorced him. Then she married Yuri, son of Politburo member Andrei Zhdanov. She gave birth to a daughter, and divorced again. In 1955 Svetlana had a brief meeting with Kapler. Lastly, in 1963, there was a chance meeting with Brajesh Singh,

an Indian Communist. Together with him, leaving her children behind, she went to India and did not return to the Soviet Union.

Svetlana's appearance at the American Embassy in Delhi was a shocker. The Embassy's First Secretary Joseph Green talked with her, trying to establish whether she was indeed Stalin's daughter.

"I'm happy to be in the United States"

After consultations with the State Department the decision was reached to fly the woman calling herself Svetlana Alliluyeva to the United States. For this purpose she, accompanied by a CIA officer, was flown to Rome on March 7, 1967 on board a plane of the Australian airlines Quantas.

It was too late by the time the Soviet Embassy in Delhi raised an alarm. Two operatives were sent by the ambassador to Kalakankar, where Alliluyeva was supposed to be. But at that time the radio announced that the plane had already landed in Italy. Benediktov, Soviet Ambassador to India, lodged a protest with the Interior Ministry, accusing the United States of "kidnapping a citizen of the USSR." A long struggle for Alliluyeva followed. It ended with her landing at Kennedy Airport in New York on April 17, 1967. Svetlana Alliluyeva came up to the microphone and exclaimed: "Greetings to you all. I'm happy to be in the United States."

The West did not get from Alliluyeva what it expected. It was hard for her to scold Stalin, for he was her father. That is why in the book *Twenty Letters to a Friend* the image of "the leader of all times and peoples" was very far from the original. Svetlana knew much about the life of "the children of leaders." However, she knew almost nothing about internal political struggles. Public interest in Alliluyeva gradually waned, and she was left alone.

True, Alliluyeva received handsome royalties on her two books – about two million dollars. She married an American, Peters, gave birth to a daughter who was named Olga, and settled in a cosy house in Princeton. However, it is not in the habit of Alliluyeva to live with someone and somewhere for a long time. She divorced Peters and began to travel up and down America, from west to east and back. Svetlana found many people and friends who sympathized with her, she easily befriended people and just as easily quarrelled with them and turned them into her enemies.

In 1982, thanks largely to the efforts of above-mentioned Malcolm Margridge, Alliluyeva appeared in Britain.

...Lana Peters stepped out of her favourite thrift shop. She turned round for a moment and her face tightened. "You know that I don't give interviews," she said and briskly made for the bus stop.

Sergei Babusenko,
New Times correspondent
Vladimir Chugunov,
BBC
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The cockroach

I relieve my city of my roaches

A cockroach, you say? So what about it? As if a roach isn't a creature like any other. It may even have merits we are ignorant of. For instance, thanks to a cockroach man can comprehend his mission in society, and even the natural order of things. Just listen to a story which really happened.

Once a strange thing occurred in my house which, I guess, you've never experienced – a cockroach came to stay in my apartment. He was an outstanding fellow! Black, extremely fat and wide-shouldered, and he had such a moustache that if he had volunteered to be in the cavalry, he would have become colonel long ago. Nevertheless, he developed the habit of laying in watch for my guests on the wardrobe in the antechamber and jumping on their heads most joyfully, after which he slid down the neck through the collar.

Many took offense at such frivolities. Some tried to cut him down a bit, but he stubbornly persisted in this sport. Seeing that reprimands were to no avail, they started to hunt him down in order to catch him, possibly in order even to cage him. However, the roach fled, each time displaying unprecedented swiftness and agility.

Since my reputation is precious to me, I once drove him into a corner and tried to make him swear to stop this monkey business. But he only answered in an obscure mumble and, without saying a word, hid behind the wallpaper where he was inaccessible.

Not only was he incorrigible, but his impertinence even increased till he was jumping most shamelessly on the same person two or three times a day with complete blindness to his victim's rank or position.

In the meantime my friends decided that I specially trained him to make such nosedives intending to ward off guests. They therefore stopped paying me visits.

Mr cockroach travelled all over the apartment, merrily stealing whatever food he stumbled upon. He consumed groceries in the most humiliating way to me, and if he couldn't eat something, he just took a bite out of it, leaving leftovers in his wake. He broke cups, dishes, and all glassware and removed the gold from the gilded dinner set I inherited from my grandmother. I often saw him swinging pensively on the pendulum of my wall-clock, breaking before long, so that I was left depending on my pocket watch. He used to spit into my soup, put salt where I had put sugar and sang in his gross voice at night. The people nextdoor thinking that it was me singing angrily banged at the wall, thus depriving me of sleep until the sun rose.

Once he creeped into my bath and began swimming like mad. Driven by a sense of justice, I struck him on his head with a chair (after all, the flat belongs to me, and it's for me to decide who I allow to join me in the bath), but the cockroach swiftly dodged the blow and, violating all laws of physics and chemistry, ran up the absolutely vertical wall. Having climbed to the ceiling, he started throwing pieces of plaster at me which made me fall into spleen.

Since that time I have lost all sense of life. I used to sit on the sofa with my legs up and passively watch the outrages of my cockroach.

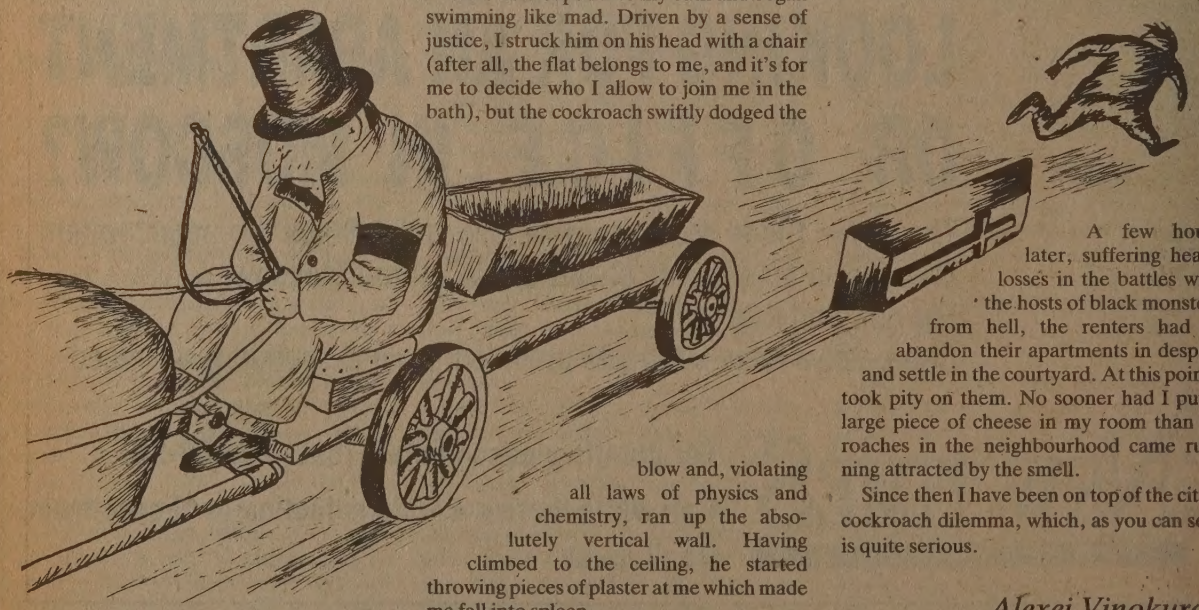
I lost patience when I saw him using my razor. I secretly bought a bucketful of insecticides and hid them under the bed. I was ready to commit a crime.

But exactly at that moment my aunt came from the provinces. If you aren't acquainted with my aunt, you may be sure that you were born not only with a silver spoon, but even with an entire set of banquet spoons, forks and knives in your mouth. She has so many virtues that a simple mortal, once in her presence, immediately loses self-esteem and has the burning desire to die on the spot.

The cockroach and aunt disliked each other from the start. "Choose between me and this creature!" said my dear aunt. I can't say that it was a pleasant choice, but I made it. And when my aunt was leaving my apartment, bursting with anger, I understood at last that even such a character as a cockroach may turn out to be useful.

One dark October night I stole into the zoo and returned back home with a tender and passionate African she-cockroach. Nine months later the happy couple produced such numerous offsprings that the green walls of my room became black.

I removed all edibles from my apartment and called out in a voice of thunder, like Mark Antony, sending his legions into combat: "Onward!" And my cohorts, fed on the best Swiss cheese and led by their indomitable father, rushed in all directions. What else could they do?



A few hours later, suffering heavy losses in the battles with the hosts of black monsters from hell, the renters had to abandon their apartments in despair and settle in the courtyard. At this point I took pity on them. No sooner had I put a large piece of cheese in my room than all roaches in the neighbourhood came running attracted by the smell.

Since then I have been on top of the city's cockroach dilemma, which, as you can see, is quite serious.

Alexei Vinokurov

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